

11-1-1981

The Palimpsest, vol.61 no.6, November-December 1981

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"The Palimpsest, vol.61 no.6, November-December 1981." *The Palimpsest* 62 (1981).

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The PALIMPSEST

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

VOLUME 62 NUMBER 6

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1981



Iowa State Historical Department
State Historical Society Publications Section

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PRICE — Free to members. Single issue — \$1
MEMBERSHIP — By application. Annual dues — \$5
LIFE MEMBERSHIP — \$150. HUSBAND AND WIFE JOINT LIFE MEMBERSHIP — \$200
ADDRESS INQUIRIES TO: State Historical Society, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240

USISSN 0031—0360

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THE PALIMPSEST is published bimonthly by the State Historical Society in Iowa City. It is printed in Des Moines and distributed free to Society members, depositories, and exchanges. This is the November/December 1981 issue and is Number 6 of Volume 62. Second class postage paid at Iowa City.

The PALIMPSEST

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Loren N. Horton, Acting Director

VOLUME 62 NUMBER 6

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William Silag, Editor

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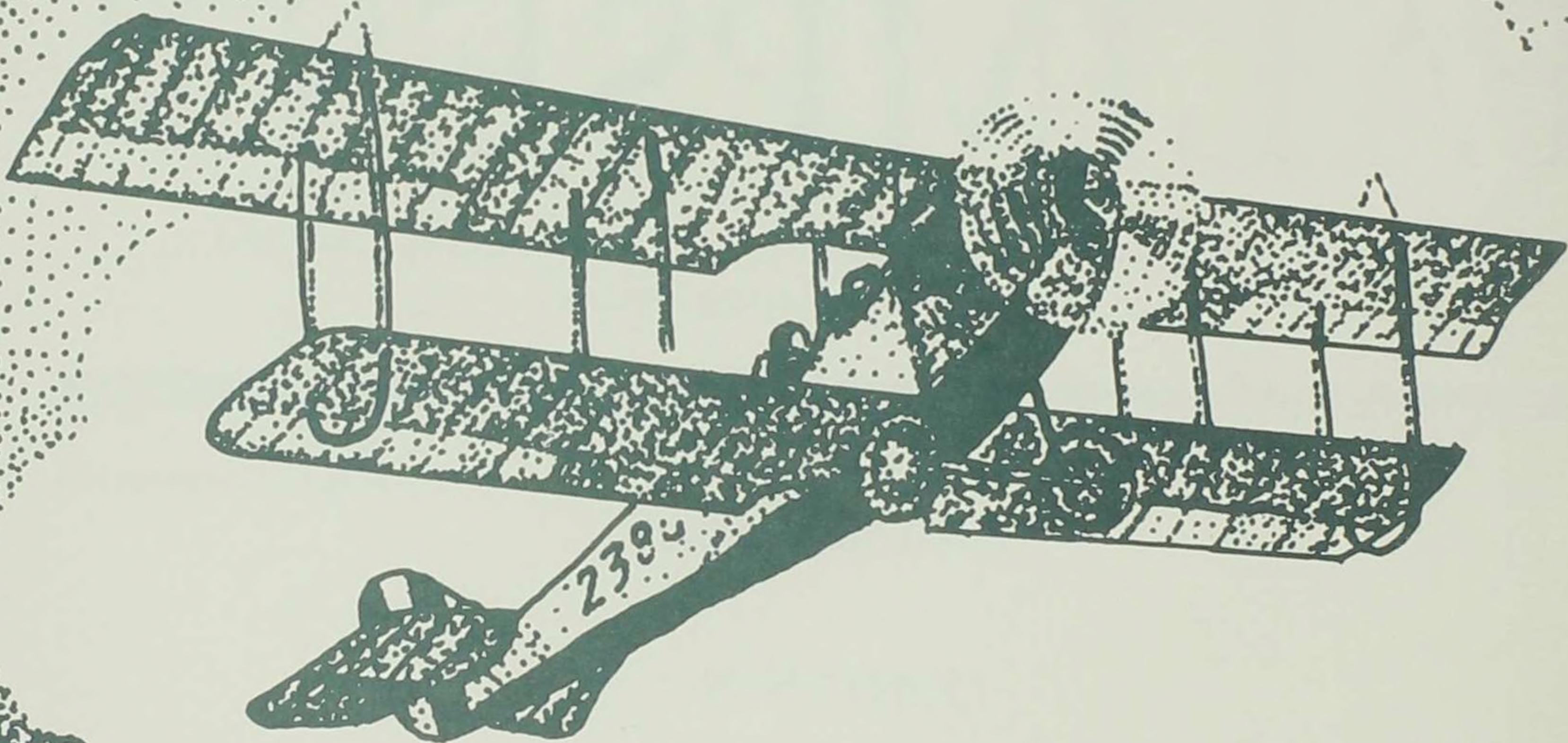
Cover: *Patrons relax at a saloon in Paullina, Iowa in the 1880s. For many nineteenth-century Iowans, taverns such as this one were devil's dens, seedbeds of social anarchy and moral decay. In this issue of The Palimpsest, Thomas S. Smith recalls the most dramatic confrontation between the saloon's enemies and its friends in Iowa. An accompanying feature by Julie Nelson reviews the history of liquor legislation in the Hawkeye State. (SHSI photo)*



The Meaning of the Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete, and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.



The drone of conversation quickly rose to a cry of excited cheers as the crowd that had gathered at a makeshift landing field in Guthrie Center in June 1919 first caught sight of the Curtiss JN-4D Jenny in the eastern sky. With a mail pouch strapped to one wing, the plane and its pilot, Carl Duede, were completing the first airmail flight ever flown in Iowa. Originating at Fort Des Moines, the flight carried a hundred copies of the *Des Moines Capital*, a cargo that was eagerly snapped up by the crowd that rushed onto the field.

While the flight heralded a new era in mail circulation in Iowa, it was just one successful step in Duede's career as a pioneer aviator. Born in 1886, Duede was a dedicated builder and flyer of kites as a child, but

he quickly moved on to experiment with more complicated and, potentially, more practical means of air travel. Balloons, airships, gliders and finally airplanes all captured his attention. "Anything that navigated the air always interested me," Duede later recalled.

I used to make kites to sell to other kids, I made tissue paper balloons. I built a large kite and sent it up at night with a lantern tied to the tail. The Stuart citizens saw the light and thought that an airship was hovering over the town. It caused considerable excitement until the real source of the light was discovered. Then the folks went back to bed in disgust.

Duede's experiments in aviation would, in fact, draw the attention of people around Stuart for years to come as he worked with increasingly complicated means of sending machines and people aloft.

IOWA'S EARLY BIRDS

In the early years of flight, pioneer aviators piloted aircraft that relied on faith as well as physics to stay aloft. Carl Duede of Stuart typified these daring "early birds," combining mechanical ingenuity with physical courage as he led fellow Iowans into a new age of transportation.

by David M. Hubler

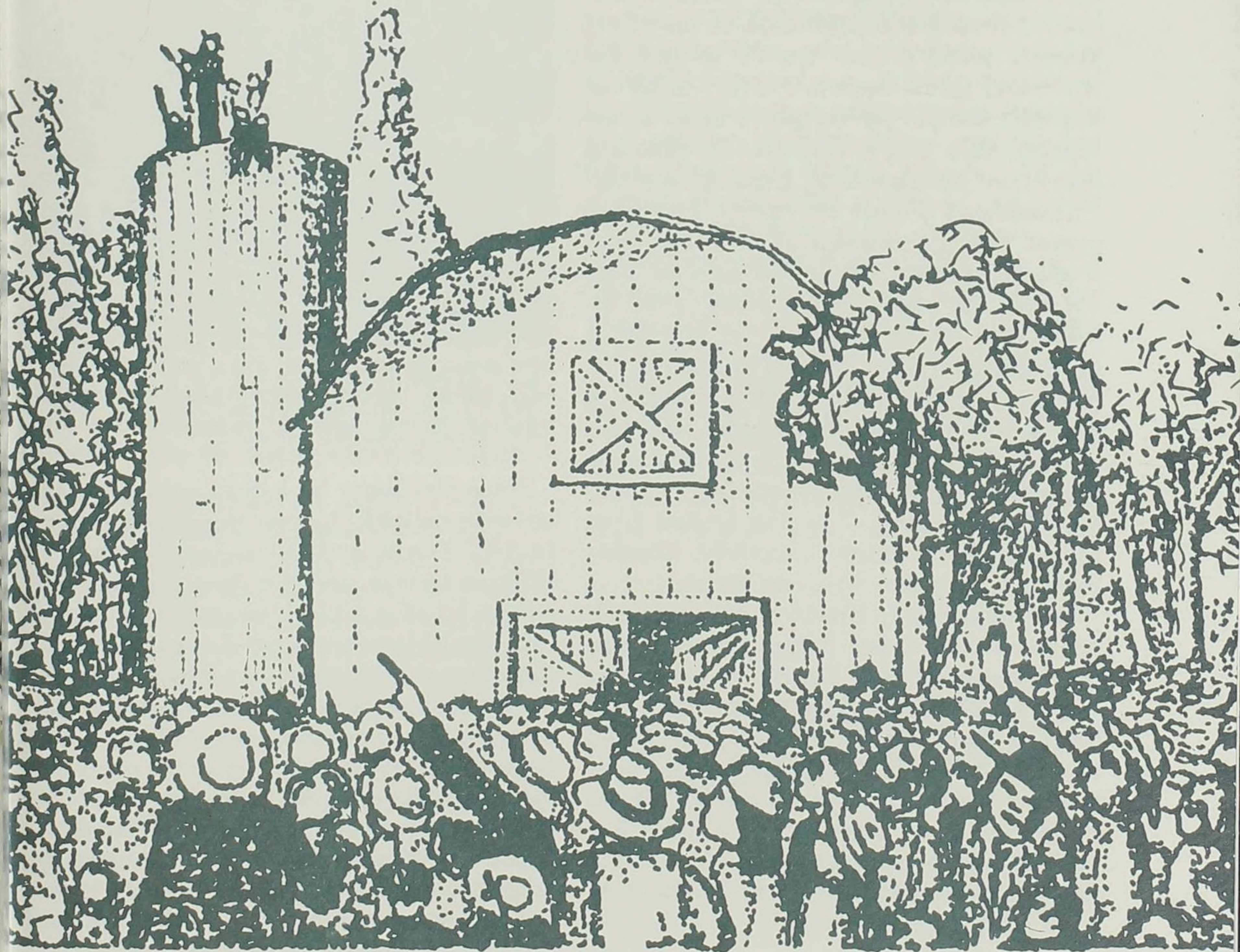


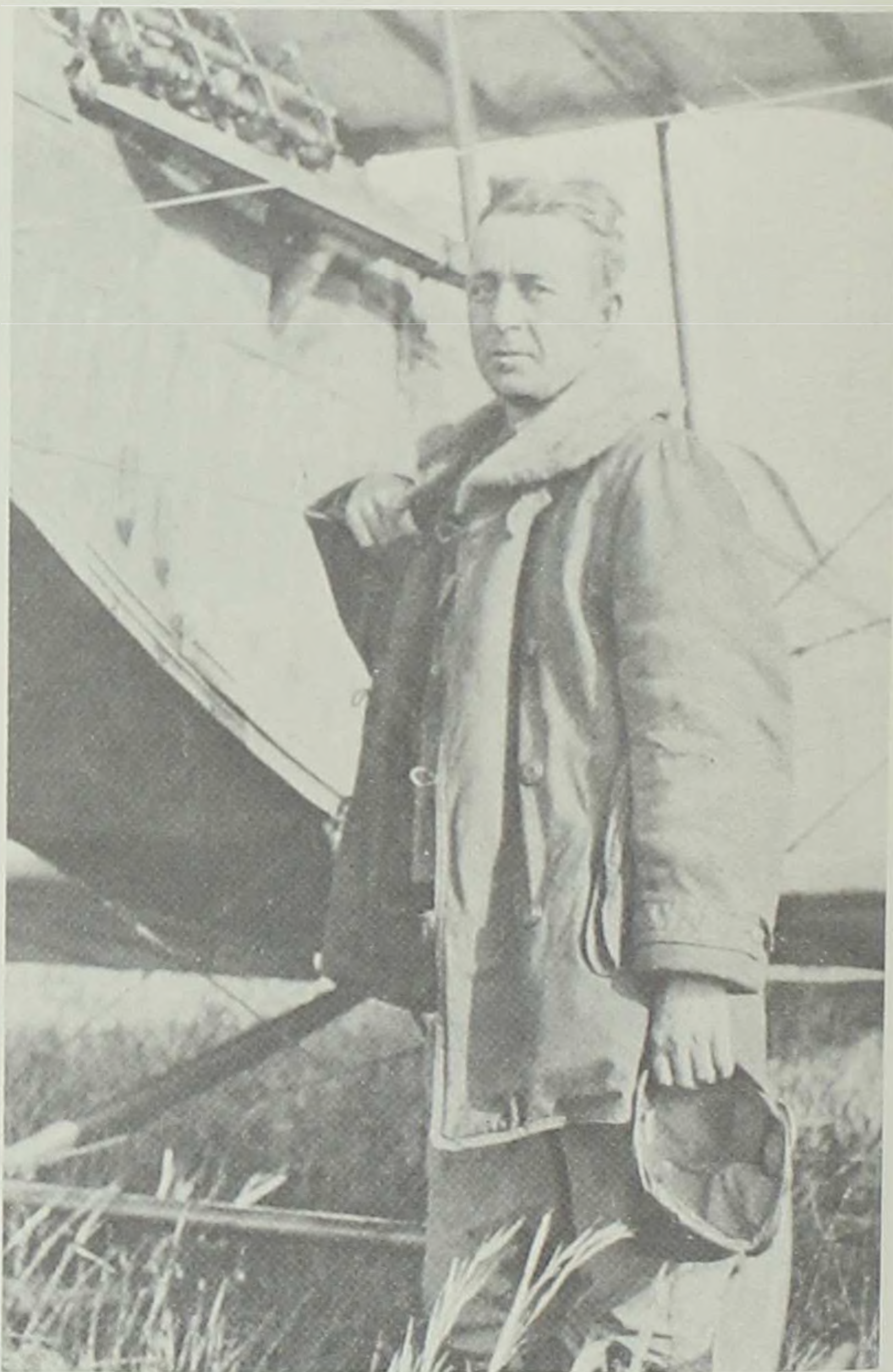
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN BIRKBECK

After their early adventures with kites, Duede and a fellow aviation enthusiast, Olney Wilde, turned to something more challenging. They decided to build an airship. With the money they hoped to make by charging admission to airship flying exhibitions, they planned to buy a gasoline engine — the first step in their real goal of building their own airplane.

They first persuaded Duede's mother to sew together a cigar-shaped airbag of muslin cloth. Then, for the airship's power plant, they fitted a bicycle with a propeller. With the assembled airbag and power plant suspended from a tree limb, one of the young aviators pumped the bicycle to test the amount of thrust needed. Finally, to fill the bag with the hot air needed to make an ascension, they dug a long trench, placed a hole at one end, and built a fire at the other.

Duede and Wilde's first test of the airship proved less than successful. The two boys frantically fanned the hot air into the bag, but the loose weave of the muslin cloth allowed it to escape as fast as they pumped it in. Undaunted, they decided to coat the airbag with linseed oil to make it airtight. A new problem developed, however, when — after drying the airbag on a clothesline — the boys stored it in the Duede family kitchen for safekeeping. The bag ignited from spontaneous combustion. Luckily, Duede's mother was on hand to avert disaster.

Still undaunted, Duede and Wilde built another airbag a few days later. This time they discovered that the oil-coated airbag would hold the needed hot air but that it also trapped water vapor from the damp ground in which they had built their fire, the vapor entering the bag along with the hot air. As the water vapor condensed, both the airbag and the boys' hopes sagged. They decided to move on directly to the construction of other types of flying machines.



Carl Duede in 1918, when he served as a senior flying instructor in the Army and Navy Air Service (courtesy the author)

Since the money for a gasoline engine had not materialized, the next step was a glider. In 1907 Duede and Wilde were joined by William Couch, and the three together set out to build a glider from cloth salvaged from the ill-fated airbag and a set of curtain stretchers contributed by Olney Wilde's mother. The glider's test flights were held in a pasture next to the present South Oak Grove Cemetery in Stuart, and they required the cooperation of an obliging neighbor, Cy Bunch. "I'll never forget old Cy Bunch," Duede said later, "running his horse and buggy across the field pulling the glider with a long rope behind the buggy in order to get

the machine air-borne. The tow-flight ship would sail at a comfortable distance above the ground as long as 'Old Dobbin' kept up a brisk trot." Unfortunately, the glider proved too heavy to fly on its own.

For the next attempt, Duede harnessed himself between the wings of a biplane glider they had made. His forearms rested on the inner surface of the lower wings and his legs served as the landing gear. Running down a hill, Duede quickly soared off the ground, but before he could do any maneuvering, the glider flipped over on its nose and landed Duede on his head. This glider, too, was soon abandoned.

The three prospective aviators continued with their experiments, however, and Bill Couch soon unveiled his new "boxoplane." It sported wings on the order of a box kite and landing gear made from the wheels of a wheel chair. The landing gear went untested; the boxoplane never got off the ground.

By this time Duede, Wilde, and Couch had taken to conducting their test flights at night to avoid the derision of the townspeople. The town of Stuart had just completed a new 124-foot water tower, and when the three boys decided to launch some new test models, the water tower seemed the ideal site. Duede later described the clandestine tower launchings:

We would sneak up there at night, throw off our models and watch the results. One evening just at dusk, one of Bill's glider models tangled with the two electric light wires which ran to the public library. We on the water tower were horrified when the wires bounced together and emitted a big ball of fire. To add to the excitement, the lights went out every time the wires touched. We crouched up there wondering if those wires would ever stop coming together and end the fireworks. Just as we feared, the mayor appeared before we could get down, and we were

warned not to mount that tower again for any purpose. It was evident that the mayor was opposed to aviation.

It was at about this time, too, that Stuart's three aviation buffs began to scan the advertisements in a new Chicago magazine, *Aero*, for a used engine to power the craft all these experiments were leading to — their own airplane.

Their enthusiasm was heightened by a trip Olney Wilde and his father made to Chicago in August 1911 to attend an international air meet sponsored by the Aero Club of Illinois. The meet featured Jimmy Ward, in his famous "Shooting Star," and Lincoln Beachey, who later flew a number of exhibitions in Iowa. Wilde's account of the meet was later supplemented by the visits of a number of international aviators and their airplanes to nearby Atlantic. All this whetted the appetites of Duede's group for finally getting, and staying, in the air.

Their next attempt at a glider flew (with the aid of an automobile or a team of horses and a wagon), but in one flight with Olney Wilde at the controls the glider crashed, and Wilde was dragged for seventy-five feet before the automobile pulling it could come to a stop. This incident caused Wilde's father to call a halt to Olney's career as an aviator.

But Duede and Couch continued to work closely together, and their next glider was



An early tow-flight glider, dating from the early 1910s (courtesy the author)

more successful. It soared to heights of seventy-five to a hundred feet when pulled by a horse and buggy, but, Duede admitted, this means of propulsion did have its drawbacks:

If the wind was blowing hard the machine would buck up and down like a bronco. . . . Couch's first attempt to fly the plane was comical but nearly disastrous. He got up about thirty feet but could not get the machine to level off. The tow rope was tied to the landing gear. The axle broke and Couch came sliding down backwards out of the air.

As the number of glider mishaps rose, the local newspaper editor decided to keep two or three obituaries on hand, expecting that the young experimenters would shortly be dragged from a fatal crackup. In spite of the local residents' apprehensions, Duede and Couch continued to fly their gliders, and they gradually became accustomed to being in the air.

They also continued their search for a usable airplane engine. One motor they acquired disintegrated when a connecting rod broke. But another motor — a sixteen-horsepower Velie four-cylinder automobile engine — proved more successful. Duede obtained it from a Davenport man in trade for a shotgun. When combined with a leaky, brass-topped, Ford auto radiator; three dry-cell ignition batteries; a three-gallon gas tank; and a propeller Duede had carved from a two-

by-four with a spoke-shave and his pocket-knife, the engine formed the nucleus of Duede's first real airplane.

And it was this plane that finally carried Duede to his first controlled, powered flight. "Never will I forget the first time I was actually in the air in my motored plane," Duede later said. "Of course, I had made short hops, but this time I was off the ground and piloting a real ship. I forgot the rain of hot grease and water which showered me from the engine. I was flying."

By this time, Duede was receiving help in his experiments from Theodore Diebold, a machinist who had worked in the Rock Island railroad shops in Stuart, and Edgar Griffin, who now provided the towing power (with his two-cylinder, chain-driven Maxwell automobile) to get Duede into the air.

During the next two years, Duede conducted several successful flights over the town of Stuart and surrounding farmland, trying out various sets of landing wheels, improving the working parts of his machines, and constantly seeking more knowledge and experience in flying. In 1915, however, while making a landing in a hayfield through which a cooperative farmer had mowed a wide swath, Duede hit a fence, broke the propeller and landing gear, and jarred the plane's engine out of its bed.

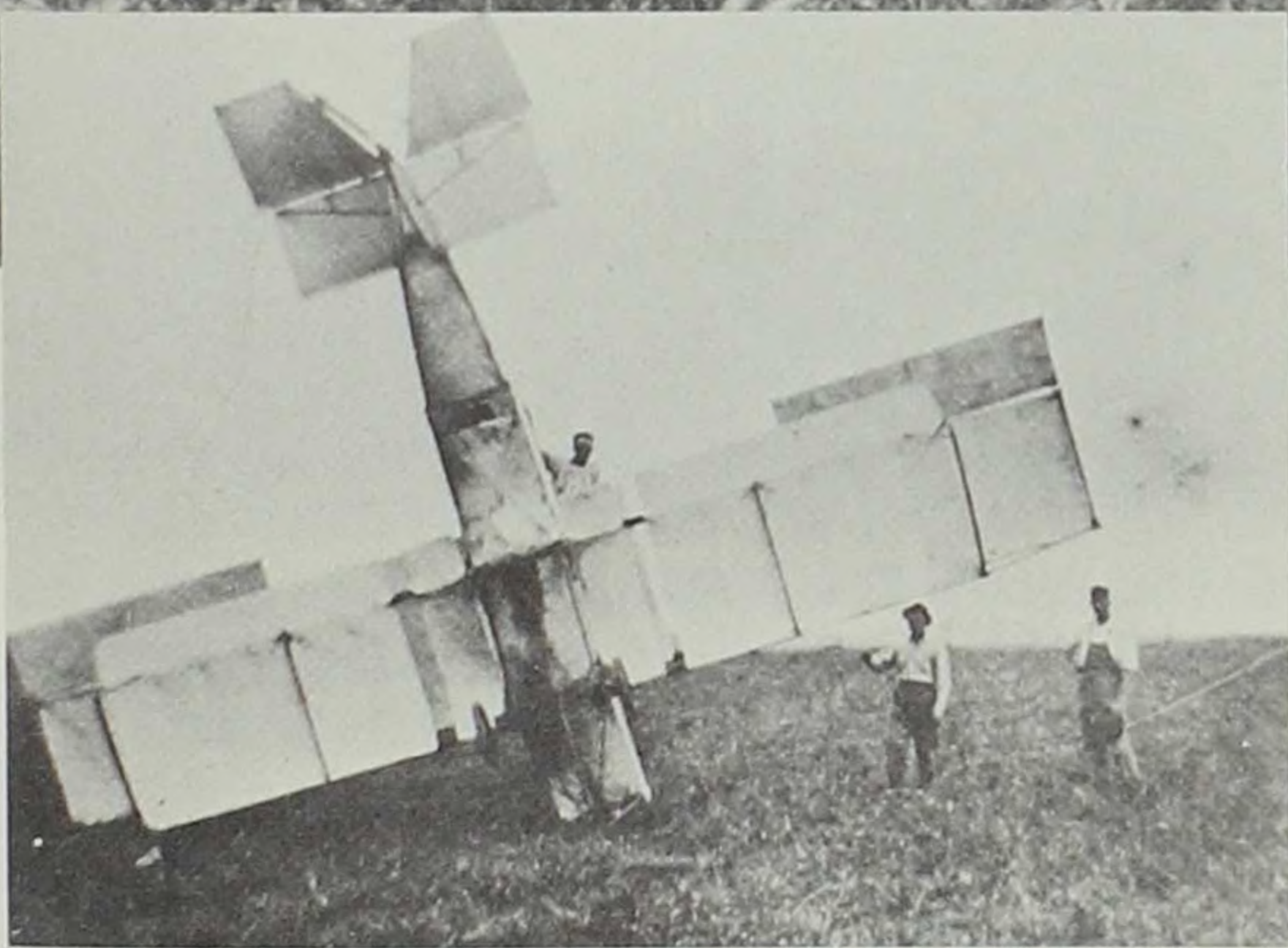
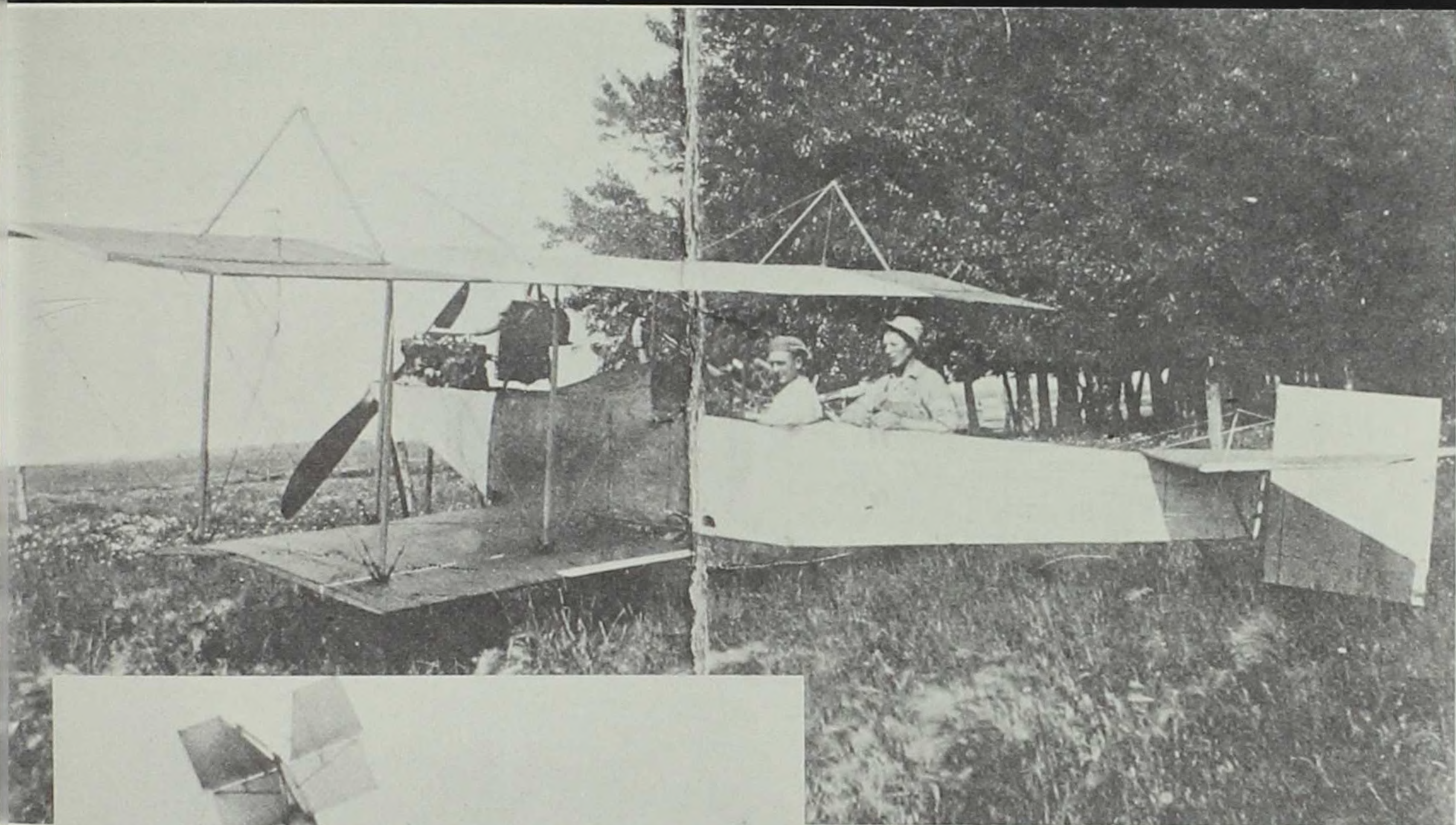
Note on Sources

This article was written mainly from sources drawn from the collections of the Aeronautics Division of the Iowa Department of Transportation. Newspaper sources included the *Des Moines Register*, the *Des Moines Tribune-Capital*, and the *Stuart Herald*. Information was also drawn from: Richard M. Wood, "Carl H. Duede, Stuart's Pioneer Aviator," in *History of Stuart, Iowa, 1870-1970*, comp. by the Stuart Centennial Book Committee (1970).

The editor wishes to thank Mr. and Mrs. Richard Martin Wood of Stuart, Iowa for their assistance in the preparation of this article.

About this time, Bill Couch returned to Stuart from a flying school in Cicero, Illinois as a trained pilot with his own flying machine. Couch had purchased it on a deferred payment plan and had been giving flying exhibitions to pay for it. Not long after his crash, Duede decided to store the remnants of his plane and return to Chicago with Couch in hopes of their becoming flight instructors.

Europe had become mired in World War I, however, and airplanes were beginning to appear over the battlefields. The War Depart-



Carl Duede and an assistant aboard their homemade aircraft, circa 1913. Like all experimental craft, Duede's homemade planes often surprised their pilot in performance (inset). This one, equipped with an old Velie automobile engine and a Ford radiator, required a good deal of rebuilding, including replacement of its propeller. Duede himself escaped this crash uninjured. (courtesy the author)

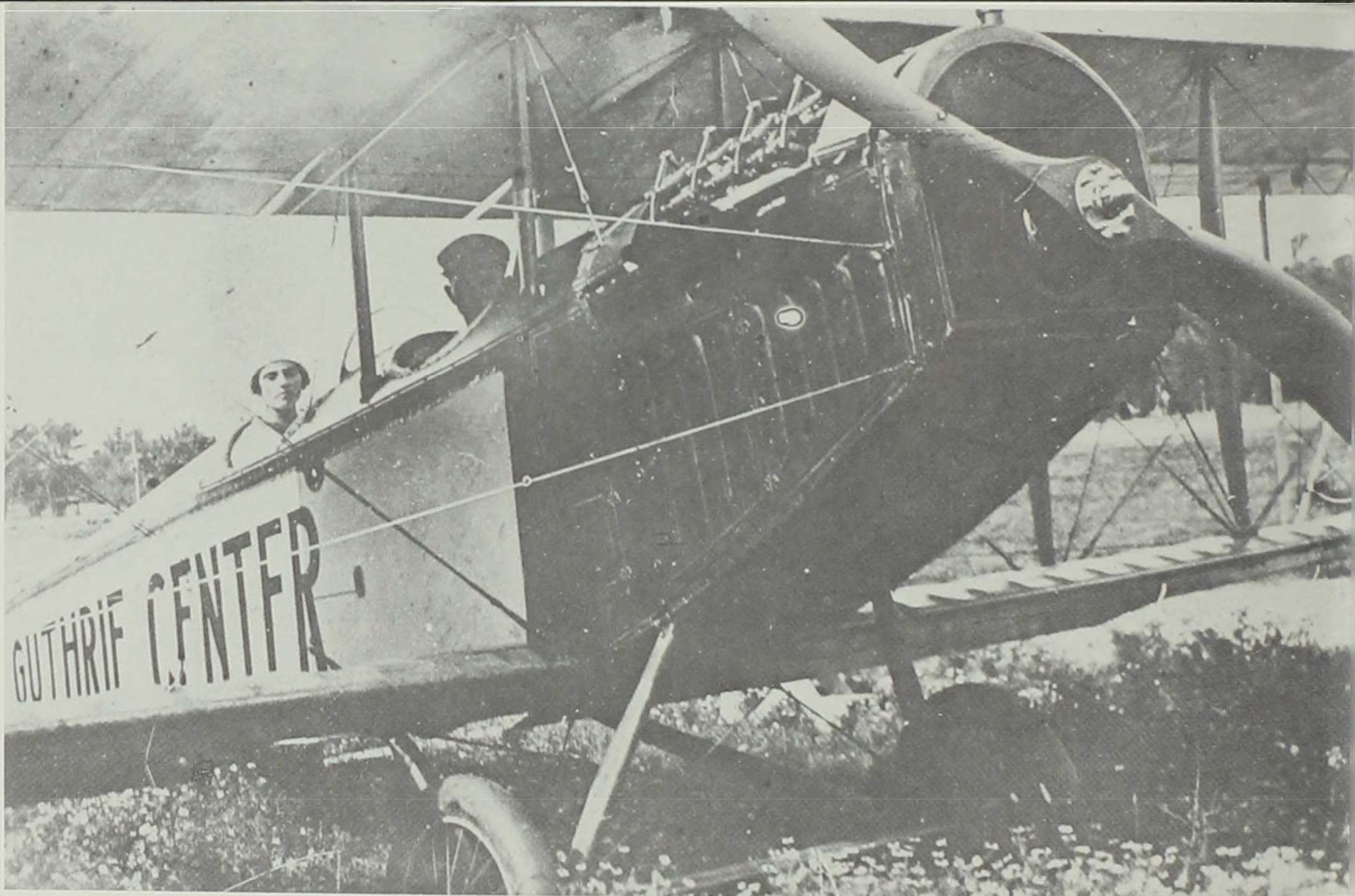
ment in Washington soon sent out a call for civilian flight instructors to supplement the small number of army officers who had flight experience. Duede and Couch answered the call and became part of the 150 pilots who volunteered to train the army pilots.

During the war years, Duede served as a flight instructor at seven different army flying facilities, logging over 2,000 hours in the air — mostly in Curtiss JN-4D Jennys — and flew over 175,000 miles as an instructor and test pilot. One of the sidelights of Duede's career as an army pilot was his work in support of the government's Liberty Loan drives. Flying over four towns in Illinois, Duede and Couch dropped seventy-five pounds of leaflets promoting war bond purchases. To increase the public's interest, three fifty-dollar bonds were included in the literature that fluttered down on the towns

from their plane. The promotion was repeated when Duede was stationed at Wright Field in Alabama, but this time at night. Duede's plane had electric lights attached to the wings so that people on the ground could follow its flight over Montgomery, and he landed in the glare of auto headlights and the light from two bonfires.

Though all of Duede's wartime assignments were in the United States, the Army's flight training programs proved hazardous enough. Of the 150 civilian pilots who had originally volunteered as flight trainers, only 39 lived to return home. The rest were killed in air accidents during the war. One such accident claimed the life of Bill Couch while he was stationed at Lake Charles, Louisiana.

The signing of the Armistice in November 1918 sharply reduced the Army's need for pilots. Duede received his discharge as a civil-



With funds provided by the people of Guthrie Center, Duede and George Barnett purchased the Curtiss Jenny pictured here in Toronto in 1919. The pilots delivered the plane to Iowa in a flying time of fourteen hours and forty-five minutes. In this photograph, Mrs. Duede sits in the rear cockpit. (courtesy the author)

ian flight instructor, and he returned home to Stuart. He continued his ties with the Army, however, as a lieutenant in the reserve arm of the U.S. Air Service and its successor, the U.S. Air Corps, for the next fourteen years, during which he continued to advise and train young pilots.

The publicity that the fledgling air forces of the warring nations had received during World War I — along with the glamour that surrounded the fighter aces in their dogfights high above the battlefields — had changed America's image of the airplane from that of a dangerous toy for foolhardy youngsters to that of an exciting and practical invention. In response, civilian pilots — “barnstormers” — brought the airplane to all areas of rural America in daring exhibitions of their flying skill.

The town fathers of Guthrie Center became caught up in this enthusiasm for flight, and they hoped to prepare a place for an aviation industry in their town. As a modest beginning, they hired Duede and George Barnett, a former officer in the Air Service, to be their pilots and sent them to Canada to purchase an airplane from the Canadian government.

Duede and Barnett went to Toronto in May 1919 to pick up a Curtiss Jenny, which had become the favorite of the postwar barnstorming pilots. Leaving Toronto at 1:15 PM on June 2, the two pilots stopped in London, Ontario at 4:36 the same day and flew to Detroit that evening. They left Detroit the next morning and arrived at Fort Des Moines the same day, completing the Toronto-to-Des Moines flight in a flying time of only 14 hours and 45 minutes.

Newspapers broadcast Duede's feat far and wide, and some predicted that in the distant

future mail would be carried by airplane. It was just six days later that Duede made his sixty-five-mile airmail flight from Fort Des Moines to Guthrie Center, delivering the hundred copies of the *Des Moines Capital* in less than an hour.

With Duede's second triumph, optimism blossomed in Guthrie Center concerning the proposed aviation center. The *Guthrie Times* described Duede as one of the best aviators in the land, and the newspaper noted plans for the organization of an aviation school. Preparations for a proper landing field and an aircraft hangar were already underway at the local fairgrounds.

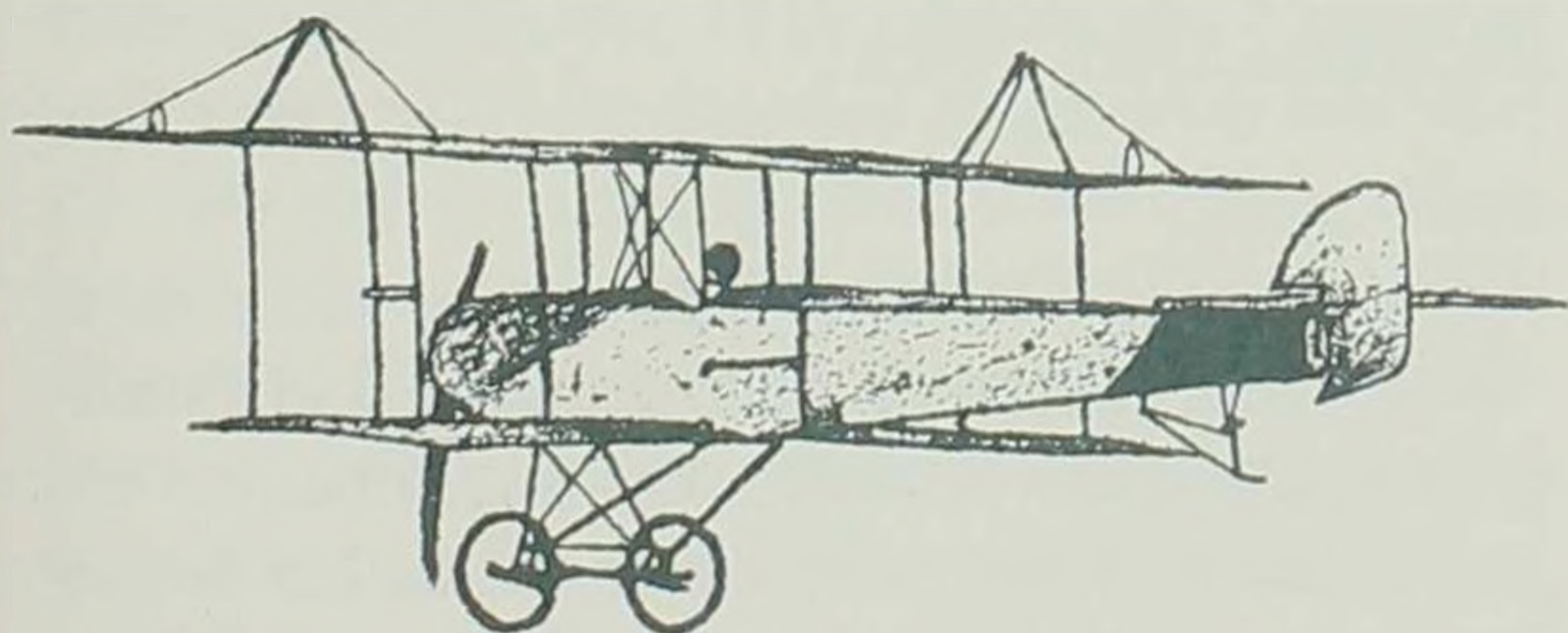
A machinist, Emil Gustafson of Chicago, was brought in to put the airplane in shape. For an exhibition, Duede and Gustafson took the plane up to over 3,200 feet in an ascent that local people compared to the path of a great bird. The local newspaper reported that the aviators "performed many tricks . . . such as loops, tail spins, steep banks and reverses, and Immelman Turns." Duede finished his exhibition with a dead-stick landing to the exuberant adulation of the crowd at the field.

Duede later barnstormed with the Jenny around southern and central Iowa, giving flight exhibitions and offering rides to interested spectators for \$1.00 a minute. But Duede's career as a pilot evidently came to an end soon after this. An obituary published

after his death in 1956 noted that health precluded his flying in later years. He evidently never flew a plane again after 1919.

When he gave up flying, Duede returned to his first love — glider construction. He designed and built a number of gliders over the ensuing years. A note in the *Stuart Herald* in 1930, for example, observed that Duede had recently left for Murphreesboro, Tennessee to assemble a new glider he had designed and built for Interstate Airlines, Incorporated. The glider carried two people and was used in training students for exhibition flying. In the summer of 1930, the *Des Moines Tribune-Capital* pictured Duede with another of his gliders, touted as one of the smallest and lightest gliders in the country, with a wingspan of 28 feet and a weight of only 110 pounds. The craft also featured shock-absorbing landing gear.

After pursuing his career as an aviation experimenter, pilot, designer, and builder, Carl Duede died on September 11, 1956 in the house in Stuart where he had been born. In 1957, Evert Weeks, an aviation history collector, began to piece together an example of Duede's work. Following up on an old friend's lead, he found a gas tank and throttle controls in an old Stuart machine shop, perhaps the shop owned by Theodore Diebold, one of the few Stuart residents who professed any faith in Duede's early experiments. Weeks found both steering and landing gear in a shed on the Duede farm. Finally, he also located a fuselage and wing struts. He and Mrs. Duede donated the collection of aircraft components to the Iowa Department of History and Archives in Des Moines, now the Division of Historical Museum and Archives. Today, visitors to the museum can see the airplane that was reconstructed from the various parts — the oldest Iowa-built aircraft in existence. □



A Curtiss Jenny soars above the Iowa landscape (SHSI)

Senator Guy Gillette

Foils the Execution Committee

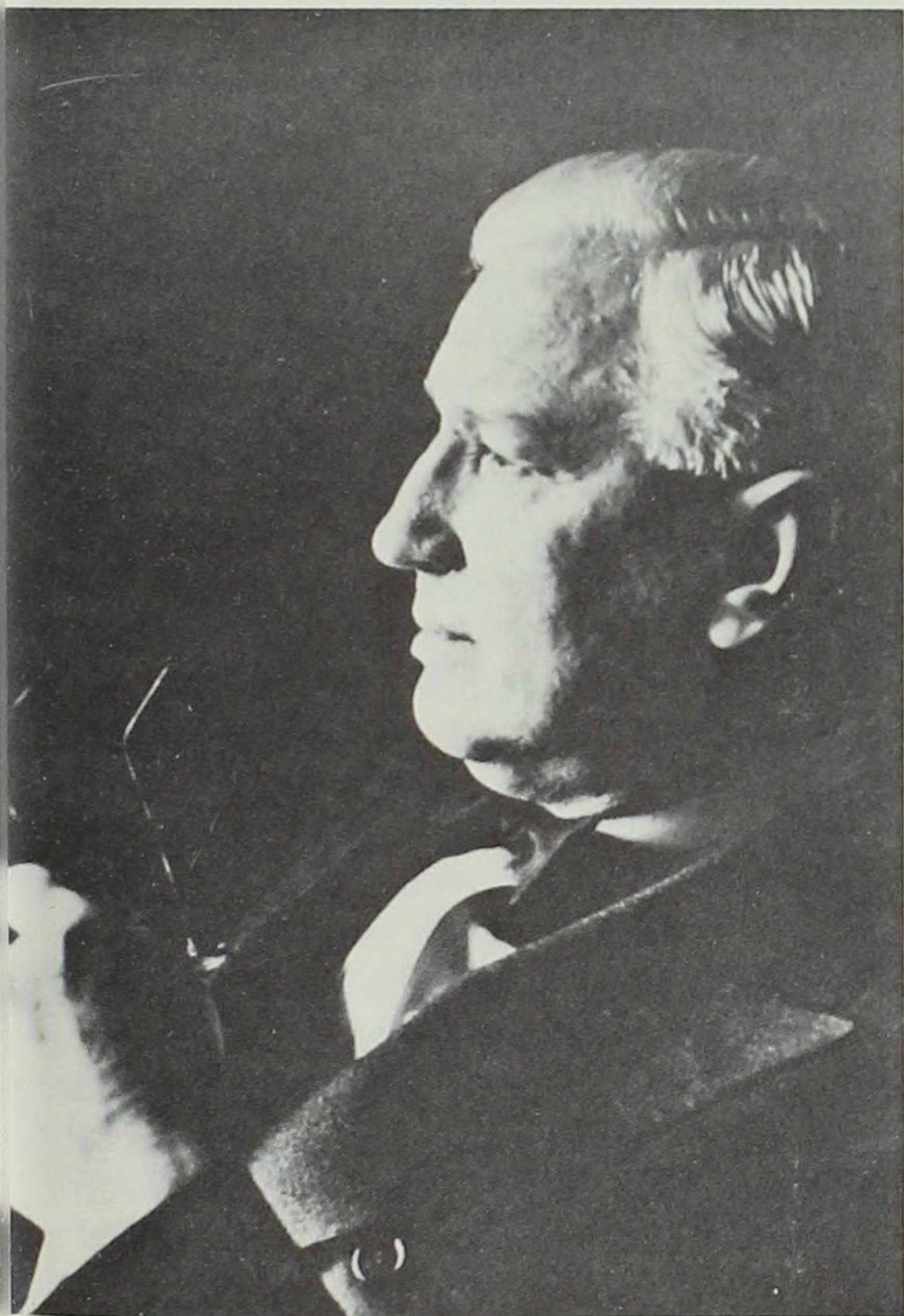
by Jerry Harrington

FDR felt he needed total partisan loyalty if his New Deal programs were to succeed. In his first term, the President relied on the art of persuasion to keep congressional Democrats in line. Later his methods became less subtle.

Long considered a Republican stronghold, the state of Iowa has on several occasions in its history ignored tradition and sent Democrats to Congress. One such congressman, Guy M. Gillette of Cherokee, challenged the Republican party's twentieth-century domination of state politics with his election in 1932 to the House of Representatives from western Iowa's Ninth District. Gillette's election, of course, coincided with the dramatic victory of Franklin D. Roosevelt over incumbent Republican President Herbert Hoover, a victory that signaled the beginning of the New Deal in the United States. Unlike many of his freshman colleagues in Congress, however, Guy Gillette stood somewhat outside the New Deal fold, supporting his party leader on most issues but refusing to endorse the President's program of political and economic reform without question.

During his two terms in the House, from 1933 to 1936, Gillette established himself as an independent Democrat with moderate views, a stance Roosevelt found increasingly at odds with his own desire to keep a tight rein on the Democratic Congress. Gillette's election to the Senate in a special election in 1936 therefore increased not only the Iowan's visibility in national politics but also the apparent vulnerability of the New Deal legislative coalition that had been forged during Roosevelt's first term of office. With the Iowa primary elections just a few months ahead, Roosevelt concluded that he had to find a replacement for the recalcitrant legislator from Iowa.

Guy M. Gillette had been born near Cherokee in 1879. He attended Drake University Law School, was admitted to the Iowa bar in 1900, and returned to his hometown in northwestern Iowa to practice law.



He served there as city attorney and Cherokee County's prosecuting attorney. Gillette was elected to the state senate as a Democrat in 1912, and he held this post until 1916, when he entered military service. When he returned to Iowa after serving in World War I, he found he had been nominated to run for state auditor in the 1918 campaign. Defeated in the election, he decided to give up law and go into dairy farming. Not until 1932, when his friends persuaded him to run for the U.S. House of Representatives from the Ninth District, did he re-enter politics, and this time he won the seat by a 10,000-vote majority.

Following Roosevelt to Washington in 1933, Gillette established himself as a supporter of the New Deal, though not an un-

critical one. He voted for most major New Deal bills, but opposed both the National Industrial Recovery Act and the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Gillette was re-elected in 1934 by a 26,000-vote margin. In 1936, he was re-nominated for a third term, but decided to abandon his House seat to run for the Senate when the death of Democratic Senator Louis B. Murphy opened up a two-year term. He was elected, thus arriving in the Senate at the same time as former Iowa governor Clyde Herring, who had won a full six-year term in the same election.

Gillette had no sooner taken his oath of office in the Senate than he plunged into a controversy over the Supreme Court. Roosevelt, stunned by New Deal setbacks at the hands of the court during his first term, announced on February 5, 1937 that he hoped to nominate for the Supreme Court justices who were sympathetic to his ideals of government. He proposed that a new justice be added for every member who was seventy years old or older and who had had more than ten months' experience on the court, up to a maximum of six additional judges.

Gillette wasted little time in disclosing his opposition to the plan. Three days after the White House announcement he stated that he would fight the bill, calling it inopportune, untimely, and "an attempt to afford political control of the Supreme Court."

The high court itself soon lessened Roosevelt's need for the plan by ruling in favor of the New Deal's National Labor Relations Act in April and the Social Security Act in May. Also, Roosevelt was able to appoint New Deal Senator Hugo Black of Alabama to the court, thus strengthening its liberal complexion. His legislation to enlarge the court, however, did not pass, and the "victory" the President won over the court left a bitter taste in his mouth, especially when he recalled the initial Senate opposition to the measure.

Roosevelt's impatience with Congress was heightened when he found that many legislators were also reluctant to approve other measures in the steady stream of New Deal legislation. The 75th Congress, elected in 1936, was overwhelmingly Democratic and seemed a ready and willing partner to pass further progressive legislation. With unemployment nearing the five-million mark by the summer of 1937, FDR called a special session to convene in November and presented a five-point plan calling for crop control, wages and hours legislation, executive reorganization, regional planning, and revision of the antitrust laws. But Congress, despite its seemingly liberal outlook, balked at the President's plan. Cries of "dictatorship" came from the lawmakers and the media and, despite his 1936 mandate, Roosevelt found himself on the defensive. He was especially angered by the resistance from members of his own party, including Gillette of Iowa.

Gillette, following his opposition to the Supreme Court bill, joined the Democrats who voted against the administration's wages and hours bill. Then, early in 1938, he spoke out against the farm bill, claiming that it gave too much power to the secretary of agriculture, and joined with Southern Democrats and Republicans to block an anti-lynching bill. Gillette also opposed an increase from \$250 million to \$400 million in emergency appropriations to counter the 1938 recession, and he came out against an amendment to the Social Security Act granting the federal government greater authority over state officials operating under state unemployment compensation laws.

Gillette's voting reflected more than a disagreement with the administration over individual pieces of legislation. Gillette's philosophy of government differed from that of the New Deal. While the New Deal pursued a policy of vastly increased government

spending to meet the problems created by the Depression, Gillette said in 1938 that *there must be a curtailment of the tremendous government expenditures not absolutely essential to meet the demands for relief. . . . the gain from engaging in further pump priming would not be proportionate to the heavy further burden of indebtedness and obligations it would invoke.*

On another occasion, he said that he favored "the largest measure of state and local control as in keeping with provisions of the act to be administered." If Roosevelt wanted to expand federal power to deal with the nation's economic troubles, he could not count on the support of the Iowa senator.

The first stirrings of what would become direct action against Gillette and other dissident Democrats began in 1938 soon after the third session of the 75th Congress. Meeting at the home of WPA head Harry Hopkins, a group of New Dealers discussed the possibility of ridding the party of "reactionaries" and creating a genuine liberal-conservative alignment. Nicknamed the "execution committee," the group included Hopkins, Secretary of the Interior Harold P. Ickes, Justice Department official Robert Jackson, WPA administrator David K. Niles, presidential secretary James Roosevelt, and presidential assistants Thomas Corcoran and Benjamin Cohen. The committee believed that the survival of the New Deal depended upon actions that would commit the Democratic party to it, and they concluded that the place to begin the process was in the Democratic primaries and congressional races of 1938.

The idea was to defeat Senate opponents of the court-packing bill who were seeking renomination in the Democratic primaries, and Gillette of Iowa was one of the senators

marked for defeat. The others were Frederick Van Nuys of Indiana, Walter F. George of Georgia, Millard E. Tydings of Maryland, and "Cotton Ed" Smith of South Carolina. The long-range goal was a realigned party system, with liberals in one party and conservatives in the other. After all, so Roosevelt believed, he had pulled much of the 75th Congress to victory on his coattails, only to discover that many of those elected were opposed to further New Deal reforms.

Roosevelt himself repeatedly denied to the press and public that he knew of the execution committee's plans. He did not, however, place any restraints on the committee members during the months that followed. Roosevelt never publicly reprimanded any of the group for their actions or for what they were attempting to do. His part in the purge attempts began quietly and cautiously, and with no definite plan of action.

As the attention of the execution committee turned to Gillette and Iowa, it found that the Democratic party in the Hawkeye State was facing a critical year. In the election of 1932, FDR had carried the state by a 183,536-vote plurality over Iowa native Herbert Hoover. The voters' dissatisfaction with the GOP stemmed from the devastating effect of the Depression on farm prices and the inability of the Republicans to deal with the economic crisis. Iowa voters sent Democrats Clyde Herring to the Statehouse and Louis Murphy to the Senate. Six of the nine congressional seats were won by Democrats, an amazing fact in light of the state's long Republican tradition. In 1934, Herring was re-elected and Democrats captured fifty-nine seats in the Iowa House (compared to forty-nine for the Republicans) and retained six of the nine U.S. House seats.

But Iowa's defection to the Democratic party was beginning to come to an end in 1936. FDR carried Iowa for a second time, but Democratic Lieutenant Governor Nelson

W. Kraschel ran nearly 100,000 votes behind the President in his successful bid for the governor's chair. Republicans gained a congressional seat and captured twenty of the thirty-two state senate seats. The parties were evenly divided in the Iowa House. Though the two U.S. Senate seats were won by Democrats Herring and Gillette, farm prices started to recover and the Republicans were confident that they would soon return to power.

Despite signs of a Republican resurgence, the execution committee found that several political liberals were thinking of challenging Gillette. The best-known of these was Governor Kraschel, who was considered by liberals to be a New Dealer without reservation. He had especially strong support in the eastern counties along the Mississippi River, where the bulk of Iowa's Democratic vote was found. Kraschel pondered whether to run against Gillette in late 1937 and early 1938, evaluating the support he might receive from the administration and from Iowa Democrats. The governor made his decision in January 1938, after he and his wife had travelled to Washington as overnight guests of Roosevelt in the White House. Kraschel conferred with the President and with Iowa's congressional delegation on his possible Senate candidacy, and after returning to Des Moines he ended speculation by announcing on February 1 that he would seek a second term as governor.

Kraschel's decision to stay out of the Senate race stemmed partly from his belief that a squabble between two major Democratic officeholders would split the party and deliver the Senate seat into Republican hands. Also, Senator Herring had earlier said that he would be neutral in the coming primary, thus robbing Kraschel of possible aid from the state's third major political figure.

Kraschel also knew that the gubernatorial nomination was his for the asking, that he could play it safe rather than undertake a risky campaign for the Senate. Finally, and perhaps most important, he had come to believe that Gillette could not be denied renomination.

Other possible liberal challenges to Gillette mentioned in the Iowa press were Roswell Garst of Coon Rapids (an avid New Dealer who had drafted the corn-hog adjustment program); former Iowa Supreme Court Justice Leon Powers; and such lesser figures as State Treasurer Leo J. Wegman, Insurance Commissioner J. Ray Murphy, and Lieutenant Governor John K. Valentine. None of them, as it turned out, entered the Senate race. Nor did Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, an Iowa native, allow his name to be considered.

The first real challenge to Gillette was also the first woman to run for the Senate from Iowa, Mrs. Elizabeth Richardson of Eddyville. In her announcement on January 20, 1938, she declared that she would run as a supporter of the New Deal programs. Subsequently, on March 1, W. G. Byerhoff of Fort Dodge, the 1936 Democratic state committee campaign speaker, began his candidacy, and three days later Carroll attorney J. J. Myers followed suit.

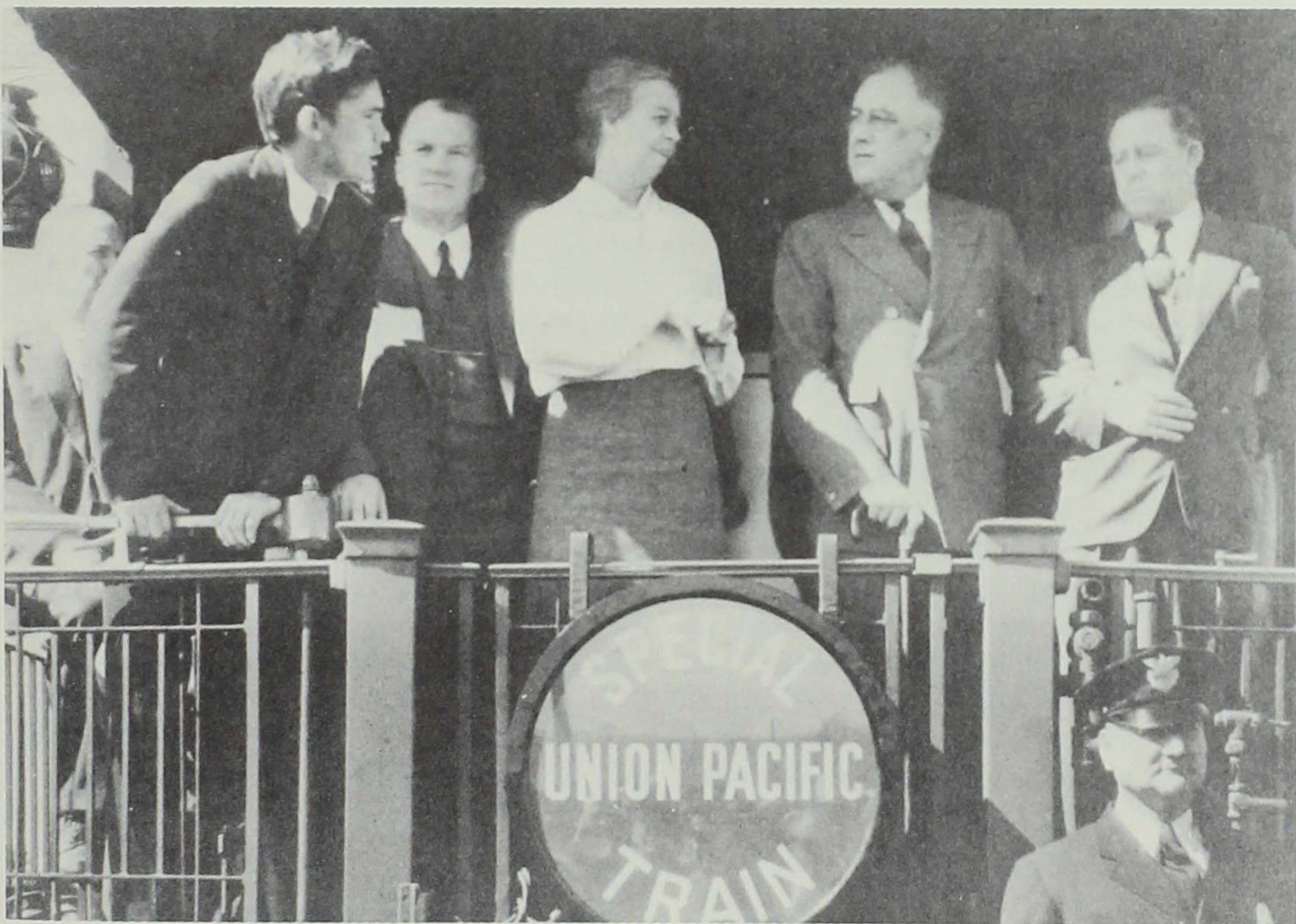
The most important liberal to run against Gillette emerged on February 28, when Seventh District Congressman Otha Wearin of Hastings declared that he was a candidate for Gillette's Senate seat. With his announcement, Wearin made it clear that he considered himself the sole Iowa New Deal candidate.

Born near Hastings in 1903, Wearin had graduated from Grinnell College and had spent a year in Rome studying agriculture. He subsequently wrote a book on his travels, and following his return to Hastings, he worked on his father's farm and became active in the local Farm Bureau. In 1927 he

was elected president of the county Farm Bureau, and a year later he was elected to the Iowa House, becoming the chamber's youngest member. Re-elected in 1930, Wearin was the Democratic candidate for speaker in the Republican-dominated House. Two years later he ran for Congress, finishing third in the Democratic primary, but winning the nomination at a district convention called because no candidate had received the necessary 35 percent plurality. As the Democratic nominee, he was swept to Washington in the Roosevelt landslide.

Like Gillette, Wearin voted against the AAA and the NIRA. But on other issues he quickly became known as a staunch New Dealer, and following his re-election in 1934 he joined Maury Maverick's weekly discussion group of avid Roosevelt backers. In 1936 he acquired a seat on the House Ways and Means Committee, where he worked to promote the New Deal's undistributed profits tax.

During the Supreme Court fight, Wearin collected information and passed it along to James Roosevelt, the President's son. In one meeting he told the younger Roosevelt that he was considering challenging Gillette in the 1938 Iowa primary. After Kraschel announced his decision to stay out of the race, Wearin also hinted to the press that he was thinking of running. Before making his final decision, however, he received a call from the White House and was invited to a private meeting with the President. According to Wearin, several of his friends had consulted with Roosevelt and had suggested that he speak with the Iowa congressman "about the dangerous proportion a primary fight might attain in Iowa." In the half-hour conversation with the President, Wearin received no indication that Roosevelt would publicly endorse his candidacy. Roosevelt merely said that he had no inclination to see the congressman



Congressman Otha Wearin (far left) with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt on the campaign trail, 1936 (SHSI)

retire from public life, hinting that Wearin could find a job with the administration if his candidacy failed. If FDR wanted Wearin to be the New Deal candidate in Iowa, he kept that information to himself.

Later that day, in the privacy of his office and without consultation with his friends, the thirty-five-year-old congressman decided to run for the senate. The reasons he cited in his autobiography were more personal than political. His father had recently died, leaving Wearin with the responsibility of operating the Hastings farm. And, as he saw it, the six-year Senate term would offer him more security and a better opportunity to supervise his personal affairs and settle his family in one place for a longer period of time. His

belief in the New Deal undoubtedly played a role in the decision, but this seemed to take a back seat to personal considerations, especially in light of the absence of authentic administration support.

Still, Wearin's announcement some two weeks later was worded to link him with the Roosevelt administration. The first two paragraphs of the press release read:

After a series of conferences at the White House and with administration leaders, Congressman Otha Wearin, Iowa farmer, announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate today.

Wearin, an active member of the House liberal group, has been a militant supporter of President Roosevelt's legis-

lative program.

He had purposely included the hint of White House support, he later wrote, as a means of "kindling the fire" and "leaving the door open" for later administration aid. Whether it would materialize, he had no way of knowing. He knew only that the administration wanted Gillette defeated, and he therefore offered himself as the New Deal candidate.

The declaration took Washington by surprise. White House press secretary Stephen Early issued a "no comment" on the candidacy and said that Wearin had not visited the White House in two weeks. In a press conference, Roosevelt himself repeated his pledge that his administration would not meddle in state primaries. Gillette, who had already announced his re-election plans, rushed to the White House and met with Roosevelt. After the meeting, the Senator told reporters he had been assured that the administration would be neutral.

Meanwhile, Wearin's hint of administration approval for his candidacy seemed to be taking effect in some circles. Richard Wilson of the *Des Moines Register* wrote: "The implication of the Wearin statement was that he bears administration approval." Similarly, the *Burlington Hawk-eye Gazette* suggested that Wearin could hardly have linked his candidacy with Roosevelt "without an understanding."

Much of the Iowa reaction to Wearin's candidacy, however, was hostile. The *Davenport Democrat* declared that it could see no valid reason why Wearin should oppose Senator Gillette, and the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil* termed Wearin a "presidential puppet," exercising "no independent judgment." K. E. Birmingham, chairman of the state Democratic party, said he had not been consulted before Wearin's announcement and suggested that the state party did not approve. At a party conference in Cherokee, he

was quoted as saying that "Senator Gillette's opponents do not stand a ghost of a chance of defeating him in the primary."

Despite the opposition in Iowa, the execution committee went ahead with plans to link Wearin with the administration. In early May, James Roosevelt and West Virginia Senator Jennings Randolph accompanied Wearin to a Young Democrats rally at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. The trip was accompanied by all the trappings of a political endorsement, including a limousine and a police escort. Wearin's supporters distributed pictures of the rally to Iowa newspapers, leaving the impression that he had strong New Deal support. Launching his campaign in Dubuque on May 16, Wearin declared: "Democrats in Iowa who believe

Note on Sources

Much of the information in this article came from newspaper coverage of Iowa politics between January and June 1938. The newspapers are the *Des Moines Register*, the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, the *Fort Dodge Messenger and Chronicle*, the *Davenport Democrat*, the *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, and the *Burlington Hawk-eye Gazette*. Turner Cartledge's reporting in the *New York Times* also pointed to the political activities in Iowa by President Roosevelt and his associates. Otha Wearin's story of the 1938 primary is found in his autobiography, *Country Roads to Washington* (Des Moines, 1976). Also important was an interview with Henry Wallace, "The reminiscences of Henry Wallace," made by the Oral History Research Office of Columbia University. A transcript of the interview may be found in the Special Collections of the University of Iowa Library. Governor Nelson Kraschel's activities in the 1938 primary are described in the Nelson Kraschel Papers, Special Collections, University of Iowa Library.

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The author would like to thank Dr. Ellis Hawley, Professor of History, University of Iowa, for his assistance in writing this article.

in President Roosevelt cannot consistently support the present senator." The question, he said, was whether Iowa would "go down the line with the New Deal" or "register disapproval of it and Roosevelt." At the same time, the administration withdrew its support for a new bridge at Dubuque — one of Gillette's pet projects — fearing that it would aid the senator in eastern Iowa.

Gillette, in the meantime, seemed to be concerned by Wearin's criticisms. Shortly after Wearin's announcement of his candidacy, Gillette voted in favor of the administration's controversial executive reorganization plan, despite his earlier opposition to the measure. On the same day that Wearin began his campaign in Dubuque, Gillette sent thousands of letters to Iowans reminding them of New Deal bills he had supported, including the rural electrification program, flood control, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the feed and seed loan program, and the 1938 farm bill.

On May 24 the execution committee, in a statement by Harry Hopkins, made its first direct comment on the Iowa primary. *Register* reporter Wilson asked Hopkins, a native of Grinnell, his opinion of the Gillette-Wearin contest. Wilson was initially rebuffed, but he was later called back to Hopkins' office after the WPA director had conferred with Corcoran at the White House. Upon Wilson's return, Hopkins issued a statement reading, "If I voted in the Iowa primary, I would vote for Otha Wearin on the basis of his record."

The Hopkins statement was the top story in the next morning's *Register*, and it triggered an immediate response in both Washington and Iowa. On the Senate floor, Gillette condemned Hopkins for interfering with Iowa politics and insisted that Roosevelt himself was neutral. He said that the

statement was "definitely unfair and unjust to the President, as carrying the imputation that he is not sincere in his statements of neutrality, but is practicing deception by countenancing interference in devious and dubious ways by others." In Iowa, Governor Kraschel dashed off a telegram to Roosevelt and presidential advisor James A. Farley, urging that they take a stand on the matter and damning Hopkins for his assault on "the freedom and independence of the primary voters." Reflecting the opinion of other Iowa newspapers, the Cedar Rapids *Gazette* accused Hopkins of using WPA funds as "a political whip with which to make national affairs run according to the private wishes of the public politicians."

Wearin, of course, made the most of the Hopkins statement, claiming that it proved that the administration supported his campaign. Wearin's backers also went to work. First District Congressman Edward Eicher declared that "the surest way to support the President" was to vote for Otha Wearin, and in making the declaration he implied that he was doing so with Roosevelt's approval. Similarly, Iowa State Treasurer Wegman sent a telegram urging Hopkins to "stand by your guns."

The Hopkins endorsement polarized the Iowa Democratic party and forced Gillette and his supporters to take the matter more seriously. Returning to Iowa two days ahead of schedule, Gillette defended his independent Senate record as one in which he had voted according to his best judgment and blasted Wearin as a "rubber stamp." After meeting in Des Moines with party officials from around the state, Gillette addressed a Davenport radio audience, drawing a parallel between European dictators and New Deal officials attempting to influence the Iowa primary.

By this time, Iowa Democrats had begun

committing themselves to one of the two major candidates. La Mar Foster of West Branch, the speaker of the Iowa House, endorsed Wearin by saying that the congressman's defeat would be "heralded as a defeat for the New Deal." Other Wearin endorsements came from Congressman Eicher, State Treasurer Wegman, U.S. District Attorney E. G. Dunn, former Iowa Senator Dan Steck, and Iowa United Auto Workers President Homer Martin.

But the Wearin campaign could not match the powerful forces lining up behind the Gillette candidacy. Iowa congressmen Fred Biermann and Vincent Harrington publicly supported Gillette, the latter having returned to Iowa to deliver a series of radio addresses on Gillette's behalf. With the exception of Wegman, all elected state officials — including Governor Kraschel — committed themselves to Gillette. Though he publicly

"This gang of political termites . . . boring from within . . . [is] planning on taking control of the Democratic party organization. . . ."

claimed to be neutral, Kraschel sent letters to influential Iowa Democrats listing sixteen New Deal bills opposed by Wearin, strongly suggesting that Gillette's support for the New Deal was greater than Wearin's. In his letters, Kraschel warned that Democrats should be aware of the contradiction between Wearin's rhetoric and his record and that they should select their candidates "without reference to anything but their record and merit."

In addition, Gillette was now receiving covert assistance from Secretary of Agriculture Wallace. The Iowa-born cabinet member was seriously thinking of running for the

presidency in 1940, and he feared that a split in the Democratic ranks would hurt his chances of capturing the Iowa delegation. Wallace also opposed the concept of a purge, especially one directed against Gillette, whom he respected and considered a valuable ally in securing farm legislation.

The secretary contacted Senator Herring, and the two men then proceeded to suggest a "peace pact" between Wearin and Gillette, in which the loser would pledge to back the winner in the fall campaign. On June 2, Herring called Wearin, and in urging the agreement he indicated that the idea had originated with Roosevelt and that he had initiated it to preserve party unity. Wearin, however, refused to sign the peace pact. Instead, he contacted Congressman Eicher, who met with the President and issued a press statement publicizing the move, saying that Roosevelt had assured him that "he had requested no such statement" and that any "claim he had done so was entirely without foundation or authority."

The reason for the suggested peace pact was obvious: Herring, like Kraschel, had abandoned his neutrality pledge. Knowing that much of Wearin's support came from those who believed that Roosevelt was behind the congressman, the governor and Wallace wanted to nullify this perception by hinting that the President was neutral. Wearin's reaction, however, foiled this effort.

In the final days of the campaign, Gillette crisscrossed the state, portraying himself as an independent legislator standing alone against the organized forces of outsiders from Washington. Never attacking Roosevelt directly, he assaulted Corcoran, Hopkins, and other administration officials by colorfully describing them as

this gang of political termites who are even now engaged in boring from with-

in, in destroying the edifice that the voters of the nation have erected on a democratic foundation and even now are planning on taking over, if possible, the control of the Democratic party organization in 1940.

He also continued to challenge Wearin's claim that the congressman was the New Deal candidate by citing both candidates' records and pointing to his opponent's votes against administration measures.

A final round of endorsements, coming just days before the primary, further heightened the drama. On June 1, Kraschel met with Gillette, and in a radio address broadcast two days later by five Iowa radio stations, he publicly endorsed him. In strong language he charged that "Otha and his gang are deliberately sponsoring a policy that would prostitute the basic principles of American government." As he had done in his private letters, he stressed the assurances of neutrality he had received from Roosevelt and explained to his listeners that he was taking a stand because of the administration's attempts to influence the primary. Another key endorsement came the next day, when Senator Herring announced from Washington that he had voted for Gillette on his absentee ballot. This marked the first time he had publicly stated a preference.

On the same day as Kraschel's radio address, District Attorney Dunn released a letter from James Roosevelt expressing his support for "my friend Otha Wearin." Earlier, questions had been raised about the strength of administration support for Wearin after the President's son failed to come to Iowa while visiting the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. But the younger Roosevelt now denied that support from Washington was less than 100 percent. Only ill health, he said, had prevented him from coming to Iowa to campaign for Wearin.

To the Voters of Johnson County

SEN. GUY M. GILLETTE

DESERVES RE-NOMINATION

ON HIS RECORD



30 years of distinguished state and national public service.

A splendid military record in Spanish-American and World Wars.

A consistent supporter of the federal administration in economic and social reforms.

This compares favorably with a rubber stamp.

The voters of Iowa should nominate their candidates free from outside political influence.

Tell Mr. Harry Hopkins that we are not interested in how he would vote in Iowa.

Do your duty at the polls and help to re-nominate

SENATOR GILLETTE

A handbill circulated by supporters of Senator Guy M. Gillette during the primary campaign of 1938 (SHSI)

The Iowa Democratic turnout in the June 1938 primary was some 15,000 votes greater than in the primary of 1936, making it the largest Iowa Democratic primary vote in history. Voters gave Gillette a nearly two-to-one victory over Wearin, 81,605 votes to 43,044. The incumbent senator was renominated with more votes than all four of his opponents combined. Wearin's only source of support came from his own Seventh District, where he carried all thirteen counties. Gillette carried the rest of the state. His most impressive victories came in Dubuque County — where he received 8,724 of 11,782 votes cast — and in Woodbury County, where Wearin re-

ceived only 816 votes to Gillette's 4,288.

Gillette eventually won the November election over his Republican opponent, L. J. Dickinson, in a close contest. He served in the Senate until his defeat in 1944 and was re-elected to a single term in 1948. Wearin returned to his Hastings farm and later ran a second unsuccessful race for the Senate, as well as a campaign for governor.

The final result of the 1938 purge attempt against Guy Gillette was not so much a defeat for the New Deal as it was a defeat for New Deal election tactics, which, as it turned out, were based on several errors in judging the Iowa situation. The New Dealers erred, first of all, in attempting to use a young Iowa congressman to unseat an established statewide figure. Gillette had long experience in Iowa politics and was able to make use of his contacts in the final days of the campaign.

Second, administration officials gave their support to a candidate with dubious New Deal credentials. Wearin was not the solid New Deal backer he claimed to be, and Gillette had supported most New Deal measures, the major exceptions being the court-packing bill and wages and hours legislation. Gillette and his supporters were able to exploit these facts.

Third, the New Dealers' support for Wearin came in the form of what appeared to be edicts from such figures as Harry Hopkins and James Roosevelt. Such endorsements were portrayed in Gillette's camp as federal interference in a state election and they had the effect of tying Wearin to those who were attempting to tell Iowans how to vote.

Fourth, the New Dealers were attempting to oust a senator who had the support of most of the key Iowa political figures, including Governor Kraschel, Senator Herring, and Secretary of Agriculture Wallace. Following Hopkins' endorsement of Wearin, these leaders threw their full support to the Gillette campaign, and against this kind of political establishment Wearin had little chance of success.

Fifth, there were signs that Iowa voters were adopting a more conservative voting pattern. As mentioned earlier, the Republican party was regaining its former strength in the state. In the fall, Kraschel lost to his Republican opponent and this, together with Gillette's slim victory, showed a declining enthusiasm for liberal candidates. This trend continued in 1940, when Wendell Willkie carried Iowa in his presidential campaign against Roosevelt.

Finally, it was a mistake for Roosevelt to remain shrouded in mystery, refusing to indicate even to Wearin that he favored his candidacy. The President's silence hurt Wearin and confused New Deal Democrats in Iowa, for without official endorsement from the White House, Wearin could not prove that he was, indeed, the New Deal candidate. Roosevelt learned from his error and took full and public control of the purge battle in his fireside chat later in June. Iowa voters had shown their president the wisdom of frank and forthright leadership. It was a lesson he would not soon forget. □



Judging from his reminiscences, the thing Glenn Miller didn't like about growing up in Iowa and Nebraska was his mother's insistence on calling him in from the fields by his first name:

I couldn't stand the name Alton. I can still hear my mother calling me from across the field; "Alton" — it was never "Awlton," but "Al-ton," with a short a. "Alton" she would call . . . "come on home." I just hated the sound of that name. That's why I've always used Glenn instead.

Remembered now as the greatest bandleader of the Big Band Era, the name Glenn Miller evokes memories of "In The Mood" and

"Moonlight Serenade," of nostalgia and romance. Born on March 1, 1904 near Clarinda, Alton Glenn Miller spent the first five years of his life in Iowa.

Then the Miller family moved to Nebraska, and the change did not proffer a particularly romantic future, according to Dr. Deane Miller, Glenn's older brother. A sod house outside the town of North Platte, where Glenn's father Elmer worked, comprised the new family home. Deane remembered that the family often eased their sense of isolation with music. Glenn's mother, Mattie Lou, played the organ that stood regally, if incongruously, in the sod house. And out on the prairie, travelling overland by

Glenn Miller, Big Band Sensation

BY MAUREEN McCOY

wagon, the Miller children used to sing as they rode along.

After five rough years in rural Nebraska, the family was nearly killed in a prairie fire. The Millers then moved into North Platte. There, Elmer Miller bought Glenn his first musical instrument, a mandolin, and Deane received a cornet.

In 1915, two years after the birth of Glenn's younger brother, Herbert, the family moved to Grant City, Missouri. There, Glenn traded his mandolin for an old horn. His mother remembered that Glenn constantly wandered over by the railroad tracks to play:

Glenn used to work on the beet dries and at lunch hour he'd go yonder down the railroad tracks and play that horn. He just played on that horn all the time. It got to where Pop and I used to wonder if he'd ever amount to anything.

At this time, Deane became a trumpeter in a small band. Glenn tagged along after him, and the bandleader, Jack Mossberger, was taken by his enthusiasm and signs of talent. He let Glenn play in the band and even gave him a new trombone, telling the future bandleader that he could shine shoes at his shop in return.

Glenn remembered that, while growing up, he wanted to be a professional baseball player. He did well in high school football, but he wouldn't think of playing college ball. By then music was too important; he had become devoted to the trombone and he feared injuring his mouth. By this time, the family had moved on to Fort Morgan, Colorado, and Miller was so anxious to leave town for a possible band job that he left it to his mother to pick up his high school diploma in May 1921.

Miller played trombone with Boyd Senter's band for about a year and a half, and he eventually enrolled at the University of Colorado. But he was too busy playing

music to apply himself in school. He completed few credit hours there, and he even flunked a freshman harmony course. Instead of taking on academia, Miller spent most of his time playing in a band led by fellow student Holly Moyer. The band was popular on campus, and Miller went on a few regional tours with it.

In September 1923 Glenn took off on a solo venture to audition for one of the outstanding bands in the southwest — Jimmy Joy's. He failed to make the grade, but it was mainly because the band played from memory rather than from formal written music; he simply couldn't follow them. Miller ended up in Los Angeles for a while, playing with a rather uninspiring band. Then came the big



On stage with Glenn Miller and the band (courtesy RC)

break. Ben Pollack, leader of a rapidly rising band, hired Miller to play and arrange for him. Pollack's was one of the first bands to play outstanding big-band jazz. His musicians were young, energetic, and jazz oriented, influenced by Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke.

Gil Rodin, one of the band's two sax players, remembered that "the little kid Benny Goodman" was to replace a Colorado sax player named Ted Maguiness, who lived with the still unknown Glenn Miller. Ted Maguiness would later be better known as Ted Mack, of "Ted Mack's Amateur Hour." But by connecting Glenn with Ben Pollack's band, Ted Mack made one of his most famous talent discoveries before the first

"Amateur Hour" ever aired.

Ted admitted to being less than fully committed to playing music. He said he used to complain to Glenn that "if I were going to keep on playing that lousy horn, somebody ought to kick me." But Glenn, Ted recalled, *was terribly serious about his music. He had a helluva good sense of humour — I can still see that puckish grin — and he was a real gentleman. But, when it came to his music, he never took his eye off the ball. It was nothing for him to stay up half the night teaching himself how to arrange out of Arthur Lange's instruction book.*

When the Pollack band returned to California, they went to listen to Glenn and talked with him backstage. The band asked him if he was interested in going to Chicago. Miller replied, "I don't care where I play."

The band opened to rave reviews at the Southmoor in Chicago, then travelled to the North Side to the Rendezvous Club. Sax player Gil Rodin claimed it was real gangland Chicago they ran into there:

The syndicate owned the place and they had their own barber chair and their own barber, and when a guy got a shave or a haircut, he'd be protected by their own guys with machine guns. But they were very good to us musicians.

During the Prohibition Era, close ties between gangsters and night clubs were common. The bootleggers were making money, and they wanted a place to spend it.

After doing well in Chicago, the band went on to New York. At this time, Miller still aspired to be known mainly as a trombonist. But the band concluded that it had to replace him with the dazzling Jack Teagarden, whom they had just discovered. Retaining two trombonists was out of the question for the band. Miller turned to writing and arranging for a lush, but dull, orchestra — but not without wounded pride. For the first



time in his life, however, he had made enough money to save some, and in 1928 he found time to marry Helen Burger — a woman from back home in Colorado. They had corresponded since he left the University of Colorado, but until now his music had interfered with their marriage plans.

In 1929, Miller cut several records with Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, and some of the cuts featured an exciting new voice: Bing Crosby. Glenn continued to be paired with better trombonists on these recordings, often with Tommy Dorsey himself or with Jack

Teagarden, who was with Red Nichols' band now. Glenn arranged music, but playing was important to him too. When he played to Teagarden's vocal number, "Sally Won't You Come Back," jazz critic George Frazier wrote: "It is as good as anything that Louis Armstrong ever played behind Bessie Smith."

Glenn's career as a trombonist now got a boost from Red McKenzie, a singer and entrepreneur who arranged a recording session that has since made history. Glenn was invited to be the only trombonist for the session. "Hello Lola" and "One Hour" were recorded at the session, and they were considered great music, but greater still was the fact that, for the first time, blacks and whites recorded together in the same session. Besides Miller, the musicians included Pee Wee Russell, clarinetist; Eddie Condon, guitarist; Gene Krupa, drummer; and Coleman Hawkins, tenor sax. Later, when asked about his best playing, Miller remembered this recording session as musically outstanding.

Miller continued to work with Nichols in 1930, recording in studios and working in the Alvin Theatres and in orchestras in Times Square — orchestras that included an all-star cast of jazz musicians, men like Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa.

The Depression cut down on the size of dance bands. Miller went to a band Smith Ballew had formed, and the band hit the road. There were some highlights, but the band deteriorated by 1933. The Dorsey brothers had their own band by this time, and Miller played and arranged for them for a while. But the Dorsey brothers were prone to heated and prolonged arguments over their musical arrangements, and Glenn got tired of the squabbling and headed for England.

In 1935 Miller agreed to play for British bandleader Ray Noble, who wanted him to put together a group of American players.



Bandleader Glenn Miller entertains the troops at a USO club. (SHSI)

Note on Sources

The sources consulted in the preparation of this article were: George T. Simon, *Glenn Miller and His Orchestra* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1974); and George Frazier, *Glenn Miller (1904-1944)*, © Radio Corporation of America.

The band did well playing the RCA Building in Radio City, and they made good money for a year, but Miller grew restless. He and Noble had different styles and ideas about music. In 1936 the band's popularity ebbed. Miller began marking time, waiting for a chance to put together his own band. Miller said once of the flowering of his true talent — arranging — that arranging for someone else's tastes, for someone else's band, just didn't work:

I was tired of arguing about arrangements, of having things come out different from the way I wrote them. I wanted to hear my ideas and I figured the only way I could was with my own band.

Miller was finally in a position to put together his own band now, and he wanted no prima donnas, only young, eager musicians who would play as part of the band. During his days with Ray Noble, Miller had discovered his liking for an emphasis on the reed section. By combining Miller's writing with clarinet leads, the distinctive sound of the Glenn Miller Band was formed. The musicians came and went as the band developed, but two who joined Miller during the formation of his band stayed on until his enlistment in the Army: sax players Willie Schwartz and Gordon "Tex" Beneke. Schwartz's unique clarinet playing became the basis of the Glenn Miller Band sound.

In 1939 the band struggled through a series of depressing one-night prom and ballroom dates and had scant recording opportunities. Then the news came that they had been offered a summerlong engagement at the Glen Island Casino, in New Rochelle, New York. Every band of the time wanted to play there; it was the most prestigious engagement in the country.

Glenn Miller's opening at the Glen Island was wildly successful. Now RCA Victor began offering the band regular recording dates. The Glenn Miller Band soared to pop-

ularity, with Miller himself emerging as the most popular dance-band leader of the day. In 1940 the band started broadcasting three times a week from the Casino. Millions of Glenn Miller records had been sold by that time, and all his records were hits: "In The Mood" sold two million copies, "Chattanooga Choo Choo" one and a half million, and "Kalamazoo" one million.

The Glenn Miller Band played to its last civilian audience shortly before October 7, 1942, the date of Miller's enlistment in the Army. By then, the nation had been at war for ten months, and Miller concluded that his war-bond tours weren't enough of an effort to make for the country. His farewell appearance was an emotional affair; over a thousand fans packed the Glen Island to pay their respects, and their reactions ranged from cheers for his performance to sobs at his departure.

In the service, Miller joined and directed the 418th Army Air Forces Band. He became known for injecting his own swinging Big Band touch into the "Stars and Stripes Forever." On June 1, 1944 Miller and the band were dispatched overseas to boost the troops' morale, and that December, on a foggy Christmas Eve flight from England to France, the plane carrying Miller went down over the English Channel and was never recovered. Miller's death, tragic and premature, was felt immediately as an irreplaceable loss by the music world.

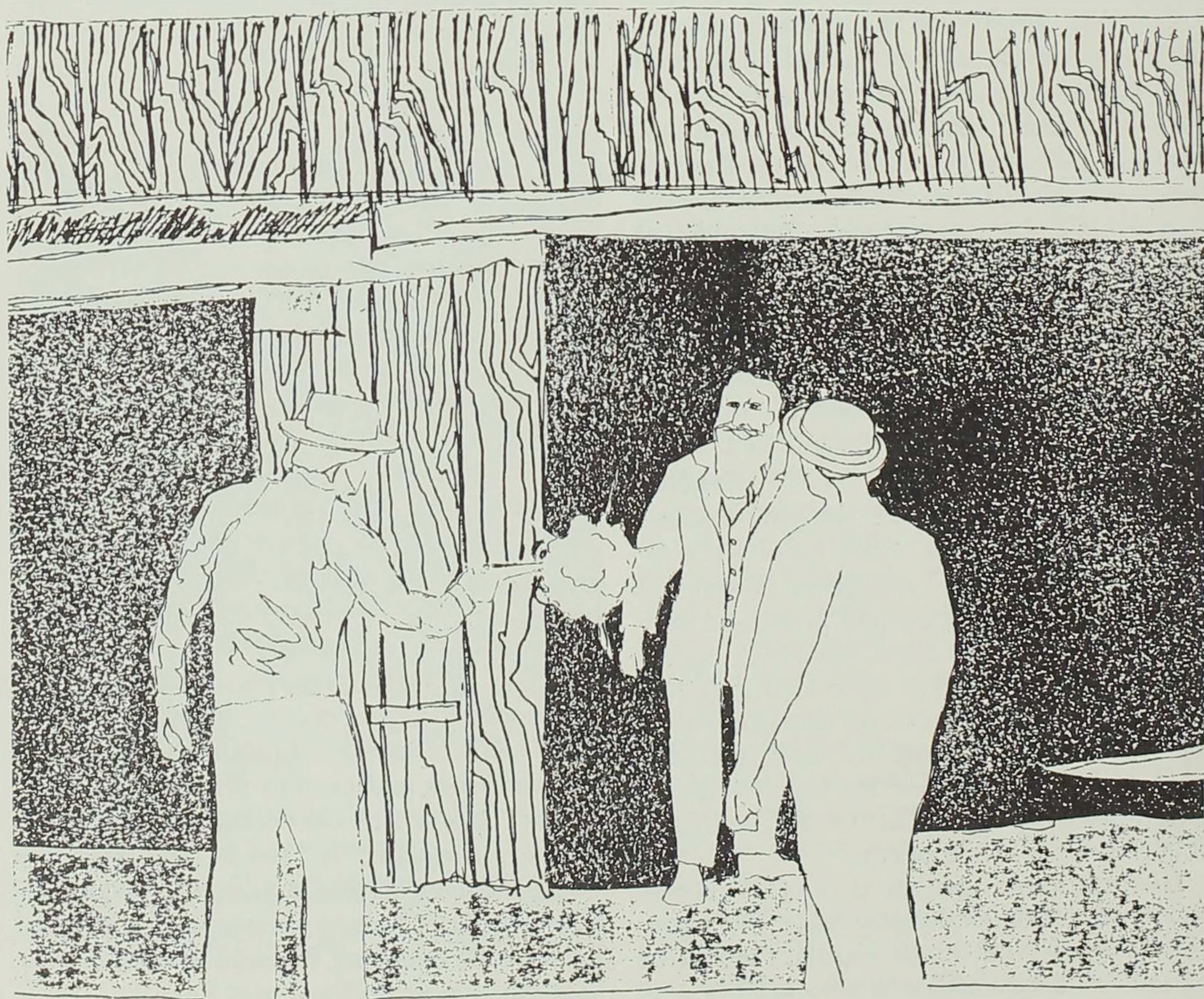
After the war, members of the reconstituted Miller band resumed touring, playing their leader's arrangements throughout the United States and around the world. Glenn Miller's music still draws crowds today, of course, especially in Iowa, his boyhood home. Indeed, in recent years the citizens of Clarinda have hosted an annual Glenn Miller festival, honoring the man and the music that epitomize the Big Band Era. □

A Martyr for Prohibition

THE MURDER OF REVEREND GEORGE C. HADDOCK

BY THOMAS S. SMITH

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT D. DeHOET



Long before the national prohibition controversies of the early twentieth century, Iowa politics was sharply divided between determined "wet" and "dry" movements. During the 1870s and '80s many of the state's most volatile political controversies centered on the production and sale of alcoholic beverages. Moreover, disputes over the alcohol trade periodically overstepped the boundaries of politics and erupted into violence. The most famous example of this phenomenon occurred in Sioux City on August 3, 1886, when the Rev. George Had-dock, a Methodist minister who had been conducting a vigorous campaign to close that city's numerous illicit saloons, was murdered by an unidentified assailant.

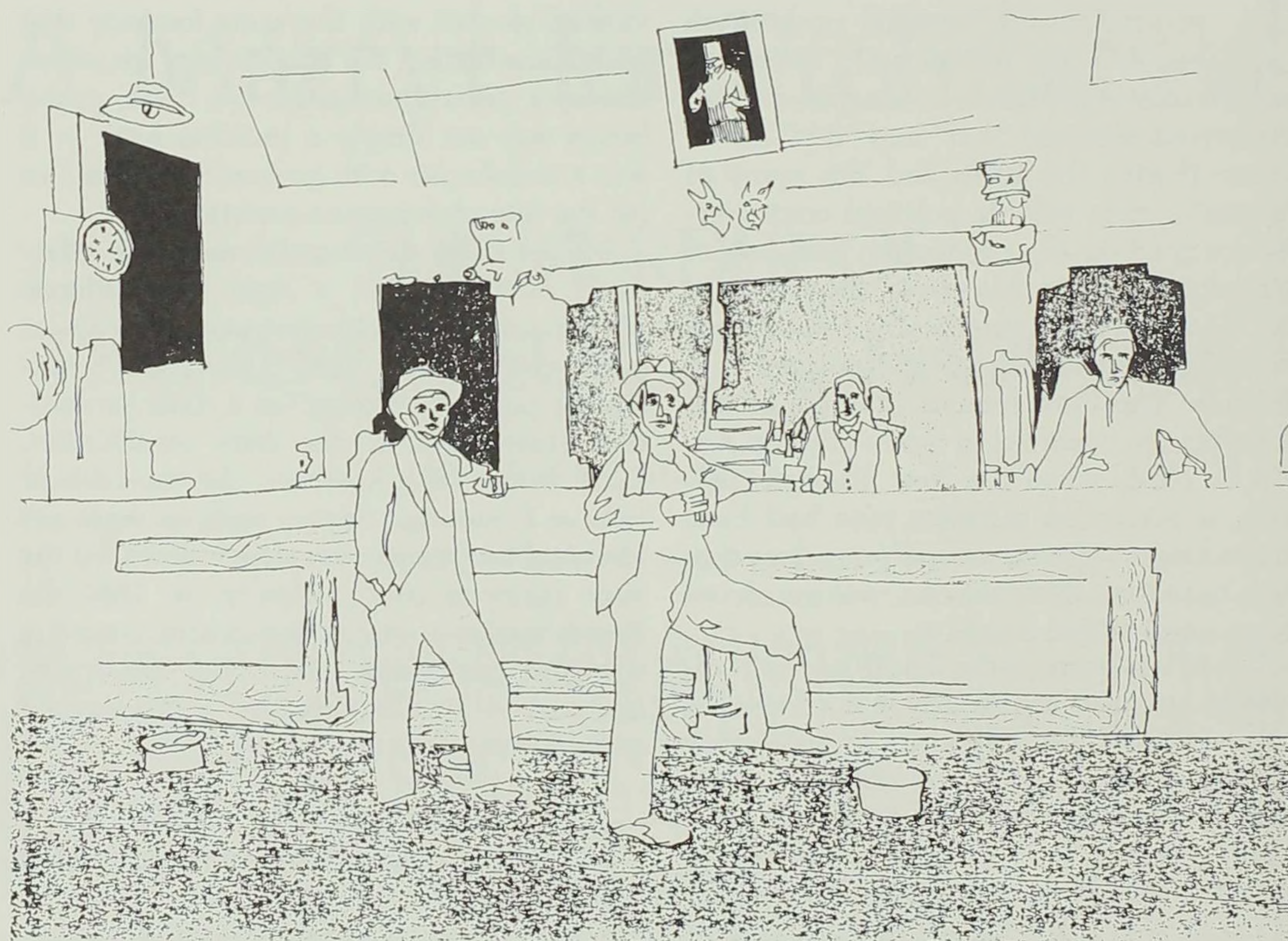
Before we examine the details of the Had-dock affair, it would be useful to review the context of prohibition politics in nineteenth century Iowa. In 1855 the Hawkeye State became officially "dry" when the state legislature passed a law prohibiting the sale or manufacture of intoxicating beverages within the state's boundaries. The law's impact was weakened, however, by clauses that permitted the production of ale, cider, and wine and their sale in quantities of no less than five gallons. Then, too, in the years after 1855 an unofficial form of local option adopted by compliant officials and businessmen effectively nullified the legislation.

By the 1870s a second major wave of prohibitionist sentiment — spearheaded by the Iowa Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Iowa State Temperance Alliance, and the Prohibition party — swept through the state. The Prohibition party was particularly important in this drive because it could serve as a siphon to drain off votes from the dominant Republican party if the GOP refused to adopt a sufficiently rigid stance. Prohibitionists

viewed alcohol with the same loathing that had characterized the abolitionists' attack on slavery a generation earlier. To them, prohibition was not simply a political issue — it was a moral crisis with profound implications for the fate of American society.

By the 1870s the Republicans were effectively committed to a rigid prohibitionist platform, while the Democrats adopted a local-option position. In 1872 Iowa voters ratified by popular referendum a strict prohibition amendment to the state constitution. Later in the year, however, the amendment (whose House and Senate versions were not identically worded) was struck down by the state supreme court. Finally, in 1884 the Republican-dominated legislature passed a stringent prohibition law. The well-organized and politically potent dry forces seemed to have won their crusade.

But if prohibitionist sentiment possessed a great deal of political clout, the tradition of local option, particularly in Iowa's urban centers, served to check effective enforcement of the new law. A particularly strong example of this can be found in Sioux City, which had undergone dramatic population growth beginning with the arrival of the railroad in 1868. Sioux City had emerged as a booming river town filled with new Irish, German, and Scandinavian workers attracted to the area by an expanding economy. The social ferment of a boom town, combined with the cultural backgrounds of German and Irish workers — for whom access to alcohol and a neighborhood saloon were valued community traditions — both worked against the establishment of a local consensus in support of the new legislation. Moreover, Sioux City businessmen tended to support illicit liquor sales, arguing that local option was necessary for continued urban growth. By the early 1880s, all of these factors contributed to a



"A rotten dive on Pearl Street"

thriving trade by the city's numerous "hole in the wall" saloons.

But in October 1885 Sioux City's prohibitionist forces were strengthened by the arrival of fifty-five-year-old George Haddock to head a local Methodist congregation. Haddock, a native of upstate New York who had held numerous pastorates in Wisconsin and Iowa, was a man fervently committed to putting a stopper on the flow of the liquor trade.

"The saloon oligarchy," Haddock declared, "is absolutely indifferent to the nature of this or any government as long as it is undisturbed." A man like Haddock who believed that "there is no medium grade between universal anarchy on the one hand and universal obedience on the other" could hardly be expected to remain quiet in the

face of Sioux City's widespread disregard for state prohibition laws. He summarily dismissed any attempt to justify the toleration of alcohol on libertarian grounds because, he said, the "appeal to natural justice is the bitter irony of freedom. The appeal to personal liberty is the tragedy of toleration. The appeal to reason is the burlesque of intelligence." Haddock thundered that "the question of right assumes terrible significance. It is as impossible for George C. Haddock to keep silence as for Jeremiah of old or Savonarola at Florence or Luther at Wittenberg and Leipzig."

This was not simply blustery pulpit rhetoric. Haddock was quickly dubbed "Informer Haddock" by saloon patrons for his zeal in gathering evidence to support a series of in-

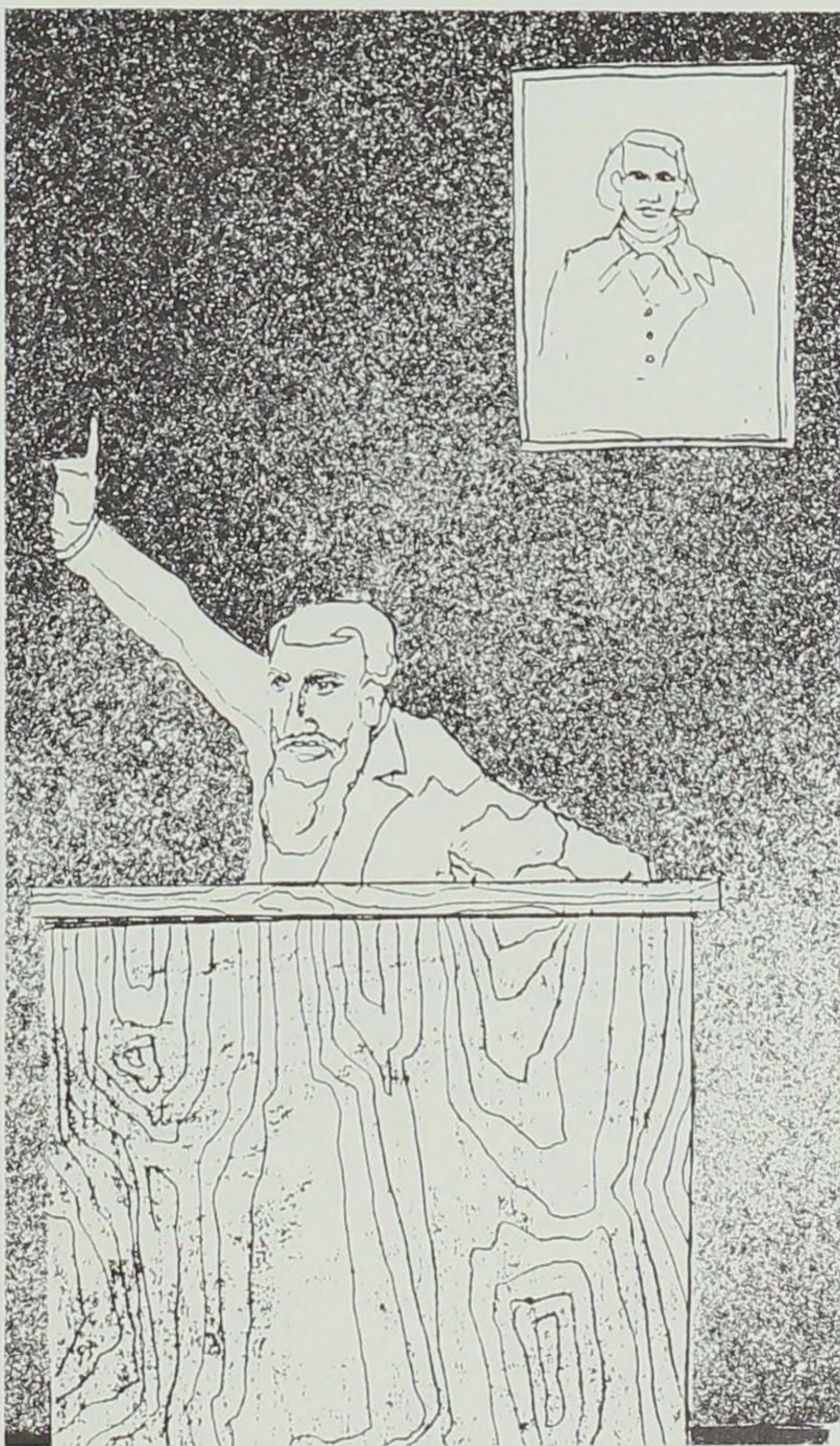
junctions against illegal bars.

By May 1886 a full-scale anti-drink crusade was being organized in Sioux City. Groups of ministers and prohibitionists regularly gathered in the rooms of the Rev. C. C. Turner, the Iowa Temperance Alliance emerged as an active force in the community, and a "Committee of Ladies representing 460 husbands and fathers and 1,060 children" signed a highly publicized petition calling for a halt to the liquor traffic and for the use of injunctions against saloons. Their activity climaxed on July 31, when the injunction cases (mainly based on information gathered by Haddock) finally received a court hearing. In case after case, permanent injunctions were obtained against the saloons. When an exasperated defense attorney asked Haddock on the witness stand "What is your business?" the minister shot back "To fight the Devil." The self-righteous, zealous, dry forces were now locked in a life-or-death struggle with brewers and saloonkeepers, whose livelihoods depended upon a continuation of local option.

During the injunction fight, prominent dry figures like Haddock had received numerous threats, but this failed to temper their zeal. As events proved, however, there were zealots on both sides of the prohibition struggle. On the evening of August 3, following their injunction triumph, Haddock and Turner drove a hired buggy into downtown Sioux City to gather information against the "Greenville" saloon. Shortly before ten o'clock, Haddock dropped off Turner at his home and proceeded back to Merrill's Livery Stable on Water Street to return the rig. When Haddock emerged from the stable, he saw that a crowd of men had gathered at the corner of Fourth and Water streets. Haddock strode towards the crowd armed with a heavy cane and a chain wrapped around his right fist, determined to walk home unhindered. Two men stepped forward and a pistol shot rang out. Haddock, wounded in the

neck, toppled forward and lay face down in the gutter. His carotid artery had been severed by the blast. Within hours the minister was dead.

Sioux City reacted furiously to the crime. The *Journal* reported that a large crowd representing "all classes and conditions of citizens" had gathered at the Sioux City courthouse to condemn this "wild offense which has disgraced the good name



"There is no medium grade between universal anarchy on the one hand and universal obedience on the other."

of this good city." A typical expression of feeling came from Sioux City's Law and Order League, which declared: "We shall push forward . . . in the name of God, in the interest of the homes of our city, with increased determination, yielding our lives, if need be, in the struggle." But demands that the murderers be punished could not compensate for the lack of hard evidence as to who actually killed George Haddock.

After a prolonged investigation, a coroner's

jury recommended the arrest of Harry Leavitt, the proprietor of what one observer termed "a rotten dive on Pearl Street where whiskey was free at a high price and virtue easy at a low price." Leavitt had fled to Chicago, but Frank Hill, business manager of the *Sioux City Tribune*, journeyed to Chicago and obtained a confession from him that accused John Arensdorf, an immigrant from Belgium and foreman of the Franz Brewing Company, of Haddock's murder. Indictments

Liquor Legislation in Iowa

The pendulum of prohibition has swung back and forth through Iowa history, ranging from a position of only moderate regulation to one of almost complete prohibition of the sale of alcoholic beverages. The driving forces behind the swings have been the intense, sometimes violent, emotions the issue has traditionally provoked among the state's citizens. The origins of the prohibition question can be traced back to the earliest years of settlement. Indeed, only a year after Iowa achieved statehood in 1846 its citizens were asked to decide whether liquor should or should not be sold in the state. The *Bloomington Herald* warned its readers that the liquor question was "one of the most momentous questions on which you were ever called to act." Iowans apparently took such prohibitionist warnings to heart; only Keokuk County voted in favor of liquor sales.

One might conclude from this that all the liquor dealers would have to close their doors and leave the state, but in fact liquor sales went on as before. It was not until 1855 that Iowa passed its first law prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages. Meanwhile, the temperance and prohibition forces were gathering steam. Organizations like the Sons of Temperance spread across the state, while local "dry" forces sought their own

solutions to what they saw as the liquor problem. In Mt. Pleasant, for example, they rounded up all the liquor in town and deposited it with a few local physicians to do with as they saw fit. In Dubuque, local prohibition forces went to the source of the problem, meeting in a Dubuque brewery.

The 1855 prohibition law placed fairly stringent restraints on the sale of liquor in Iowa, but the law was never very strictly enforced. Iowans' fervor for temperance waned over the years, and the prevalent attitude became one of apathy and disregard for the 1855 law. An unofficial local-option policy prevailed — in which each town set its own standards for liquor control — and bootlegging became common. The prohibition pendulum was swinging far in the direction of lenient enforcement.

But in the years after the Civil War the forces of temperance marched into battle again. The Ohio Woman's Crusade (which soon spread westward to Iowa) turned to religion to drive out its foe, storming local saloons to pray them out of existence. In Cincinnati it was reported that "the result of eight days of prayer and song was the closing of all saloons." The 1870s in Iowa saw the rise of the Blue Ribbon Movement, in which lecturers fanned out over the state to

were finally handed down against both Arensdorf and Leavitt, as well as Paul Leader, Fred Munchrath, Luis Plath, Alvin Koschnitski, George Treiber, and Sylvester Granda.

Arensdorf's trial commenced on March 23, 1887. The prosecution's case centered on the testimony of Leavitt and Koschnitski (alias "Bismarck," a fixture in Sioux City's saloon circuit) that Arensdorf had fired the lethal shot. In response, chief defense attorney G. W. Argo

of Le Mars attacked the integrity of prosecution witnesses and presented Arensdorf as the dual victim of the public's obsession with finding Haddock's killer and local bigotry against Sioux City's immigrant population. Trial testimony was so contradictory that the Davenport *Democrat* commented: "If cities were punished for their wickedness in these times, a disastrous earthquake might be predicted for the vicinity of Sioux City. The ability of one witness to contradict another has never been

call on Iowans to "take the pledge" and to wear a blue ribbon as a sign of their action. "Thousands are taking the pledge," one Des Moines observer noted, "and donning the colors of abstinence and self control." A Blue Ribbon Jubilee, complete with a grand procession and fireworks, was held in Marshalltown and fifteen thousand people attended.

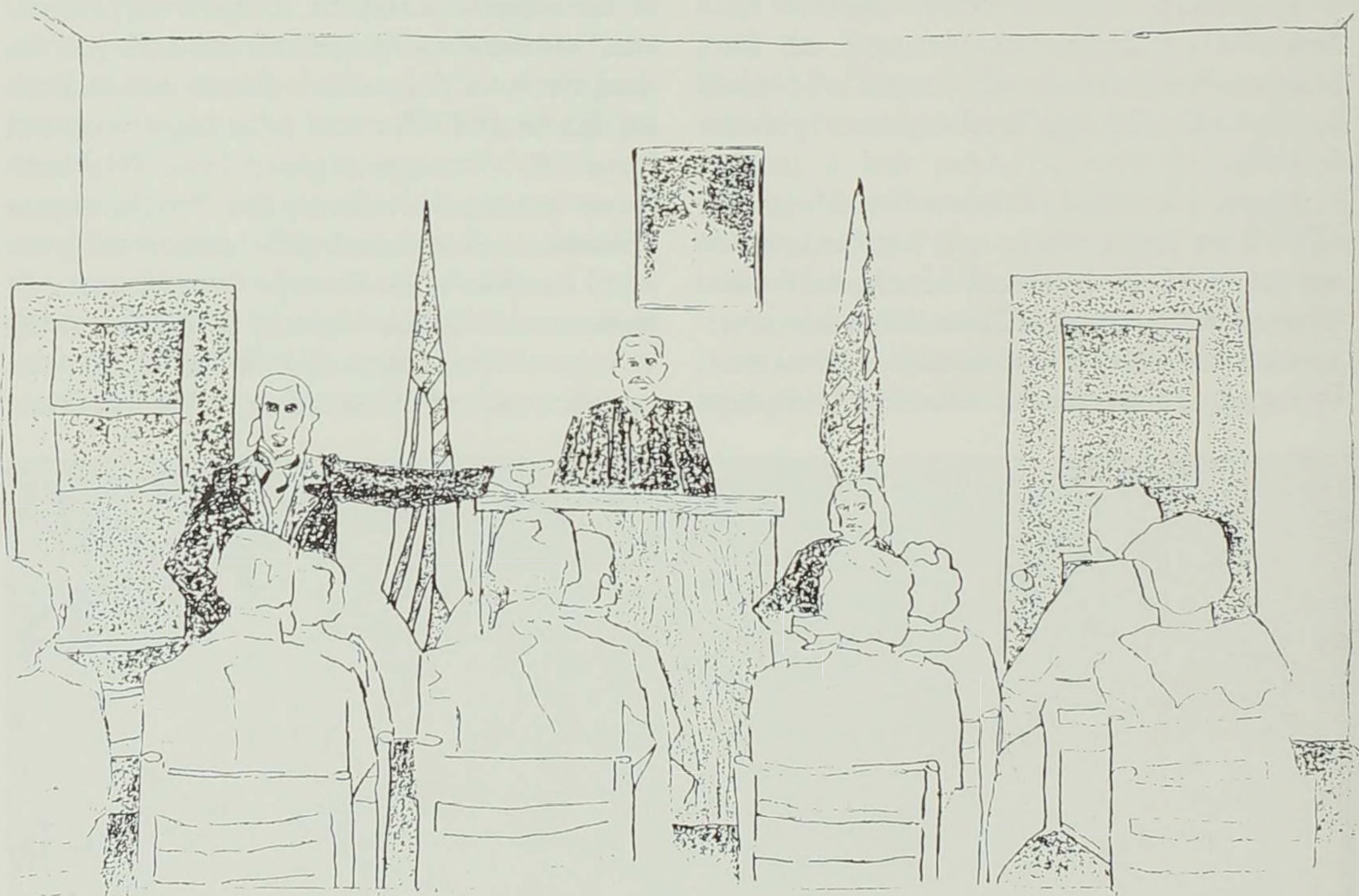
By the 1880s the forces of prohibition were strong again, and the result was the passage in 1885 of a more stringent law regulating the sale of alcohol. But the unofficial policy of local option had a long tradition behind it by then, and the "wet" forces opposed to statewide prohibition laws were not insignificant. The closing of an illegal saloon in Iowa City brought on a riot, and the outraged mob, in its zeal, broke into the cellar of the local brewery to express its dissatisfaction. South of Iowa City, a prosecuting attorney who tried to enforce the 1885 law was tarred and feathered.

The growth of anti-prohibitionist sentiment, in fact, led to a new easing of Iowa's liquor law in 1894. The Mulct Law, passed in that year, allowed Iowa's counties to decide for themselves whether to allow the sale of alcoholic beverages. Saloons would, in effect, be allowed to violate the provisions of the state prohibition law in return for the payment of a \$600 tax to the local county government. The provisions of the law proved popular; by 1906 forty-three of Iowa's ninety-nine counties allowed taverns to

operate within their boundaries.

But in the twentieth century the pendulum began to swing back once again to strict enforcement. Rising opposition to liquor sales led to the repeal of the Mulct Law in 1915, and in 1919 Iowa joined the rest of the country in nationwide prohibition under the provisions of the famous Eighteenth Amendment, the culmination of decades of struggle by the prohibitionist forces.

The victory for temperance was short-lived. One of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first priorities when he took office in 1933 was to put into motion the repeal of national prohibition by means of the Twenty-First Amendment. Nationwide repeal did not, however, throw Iowa wide open to the liquor trade. In 1934, the state legislature passed the Iowa Beer and Liquor Control Act, which placed the State itself in the role of the wholesaler, so that wine and liquor could legally reach the consuming public only through official channels. There have been a number of challenges to the state liquor stores' monopoly on wine and liquor sales, but — with the exception of the legislature's repeal of the ban on the sale of liquor by the drink in 1963 — Iowa's liquor laws have remained largely unchanged. The fervor of prohibitionist and anti-prohibitionist emotions has calmed, and the pendulum now rests at the point of moderate regulation. — Julie E. Nelson



"About the only thing that has not been disputed is that Haddock is dead."

more successfully shown than during the murder trial there. About the only thing that has not been disputed is that Haddock is dead."

On April 17 the jury finally deadlocked at 11 to 1 for acquittal. Charges of bribery were immediately hurled by both sides, with juror John O'Connell (the single vote for conviction) claiming that the defense had asked him to name his price.

During Arensdorf's second trial, which began on November 14, 1887, Argo accelerated his attacks, accusing Leavitt, who in the months following the first trial had established himself as the manager of a brothel in downstate Michigan, of being the murderer. Moreover, the defense conducted a scathing assault on the "fanatical" prohibition movement, going so far as to attack the "conspiracy of Haddock" against prosperity and

growth in Sioux City. Following a repetition of testimony from the first trial, the jury voted for acquittal on the first ballot.

The trial of Munchrath, the scion of a prosperous local German family, also attracted a good deal of press coverage. In his October 1887 trial, which followed the pattern of conflicting testimony that had become the hallmark of the Haddock case, Munchrath was accused of "inciting deeds of violence to the man some assassin shot." The jury eventually handed down a guilty verdict, and Munchrath was sentenced to four years at Ft. Madison for manslaughter. The *Sioux City Daily Journal* jubilantly declared that "at last, after over a year's weary waiting, justice has overthrown one of the parties." Munchrath's conviction was not, however, perceived by many as a triumph for virtue and justice; in 1890 Demo-

cratic Governor Horace Boies commuted Munchrath's sentence.

Though the Haddock murder was never solved, Sioux City prohibitionists could take satisfaction in the subsequent community backlash against the liquor interests. Arguments that prohibition stifled urban growth were swept aside as the legacy of the martyr Haddock was used to galvanize dry sentiment. But if the prohibition forces won a battle in Sioux City, by the late 1880s they were beginning to lose the statewide war. In 1889 William Larrabee, a Republican dry, was replaced by the Democrat Boies, a former Republican who had abandoned the GOP because of its rejection of local option. Sentiment for less stringent liquor legislation began to develop, particularly among Iowa's German population. The state GOP, fearing a voter backlash that would outweigh militant dry support, began to soften its opposition to local option. Passage of the Mulct Law in 1894 essentially returned the state to the local-option policy that had been in effect between 1855 and 1884, and the liquor traffic resumed in Iowa's metropolitan centers and German-oriented counties. This policy prevailed until 1915, when a third major dry offensive restored a strict prohibition law to the statute books.

The image of the nineteenth century prohibitionist cause in Iowa that emerges from the polarization and violence that wracked Sioux City in the 1880s is one of a crusade whose inflammatory impact rivaled that of the abolition movement in the years before the Civil War. It is perhaps no coincidence that the dry

forces invoked the dead Haddock's name in the same sentence with that of John Brown. Both men served as part of the iconography of devoutly Protestant voters who were committed to a utopian vision of a Hawkeye State filled with sober workmen and empty jails. By the 1880s, however, an all-inclusive prohibition law was simply not tenable in Iowa. Population growth contributed to a growing cultural and ethnic diversity quite alien to the puritan visions of men like Haddock. If the Haddock case demonstrates that determined organization could overcome entrenched local-option sentiment, it also shows that the potential for intense and eventually violent opposition to prohibition was also present. In this sense, Haddock was martyred not simply by a few thugs but by his own vision of a culturally and socially homogeneous Iowa that never existed. □

Note on Sources

Newspapers consulted for this article included the *Sioux City Daily Journal*, the *Sioux City Daily Tribune*, and the *Davenport Democrat*. Monographic sources included: George W. Argo, *Who Killed Haddock?* (Minneapolis: Harrington and Smith, 1888); and Frank C. Haddock's biography of his father, *The Life of Rev. George C. Haddock* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887). An excellent short survey of the Iowa prohibition movement can be found in: Ballard C. Campbell, "Did Democracy Work? Prohibition in Late Nineteenth-Century Iowa: A Test Case," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8 (Summer 1977): 87-116. For a survey of the demographic and social history of nineteenth century Sioux City, see: William Silag, "City, Town, and Countryside: Northwest Iowa and the Ecology of Urbanization, 1854-1900" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Iowa, 1979).

The editor wishes to thank William Maddix for his help in conducting the research for this article. Most of the information used by Julie Nelson in "Liquor Legislation in Iowa" was found in pamphlets issued by the Iowa Beer and Liquor Control Commission.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

State Senator Lucas J. De Koster has alerted us to an error that appeared in our recent article on the beginnings of extension work in the early twentieth century ("P. G. Holden and the Corn Gospel Trains," *The Palimpsest*, May/June 1981). We stated incorrectly that seed corn specialist Perry Holden's meeting with Sioux County farmers in 1903 — a meeting that gave rise to the idea of county agricultural extension work in Iowa — took place in Orange City. Actually, as Mr. De Koster points out, the event was held in Hull, Iowa — a village nearly a dozen miles from the Sioux County seat — and had been arranged by several of Hull's leading citizens, including B. F. Hawkins, on behalf of the Sioux County Farmers Institute. Discussions in Hull led to the creation of demonstration plots, corn shows, and other precursors of the statewide extension service later organized by Professor Holden at Iowa State College. The members of the Sioux County Farmers In-



stitute shared Professor Holden's desire to improve the quality of seed corn and participated in these subsequent efforts to encourage modern cultivation techniques.

We wish to thank Mr. De Koster for setting the record straight and providing the accompanying photograph of the historical marker erected at Hull on the site of the Sioux County Farmers Institute meeting of 1903.

— William Silag and Rosanne Sizer

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THE PALIMPSEST is published bimonthly by the State Historical Society in Iowa City. Second class postage paid at Iowa City, Iowa. Postmaster: send address changes to State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

USISSN 0031—0360

The State Historical Society of Iowa is a Division of the Iowa State Historical Department, a state agency created by the Sixty-fifth General Assembly. Along with the Society the Department includes a Division of Historical Museum and Archives (formerly Iowa Department of History and Archives) and a Division of Historic Preservation.